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Fiftieth Session

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New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President: The first speaker is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire, His Excellency Mr. Kamanda wa Kamanda, on whom I now call.

Mr. Kamanda wa Kamanda (Zaire) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to join the speakers who have preceded me at this rostrum in offering you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, warm and hearty congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fiftieth regular session. I am particularly pleased that the President of the General Assembly is the representative of Portugal, a friendly country with which my country, the Republic of Zaire, has long enjoyed excellent relations marked by trust and mutual respect. We feel that your intellectual abilities and diplomatic skills, together with your long experience of international affairs, guarantee the success of our work here.

My congratulations go also to the other elected members of the Bureau, and I wish them every success in their delicate task of providing you with assistance.

Allow me also to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Essy Amara, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the sister Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, to whom I am bound by long-standing ties of personal friendship. I should like to express to him our joy and pride on seeing how masterfully he guided the work of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth regular session and our appreciation of the energy, skill and ability with which he discharged his mandate.

Finally, I should like to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his excellent preparatory work for this session, his outstanding efforts to strengthen the role of the United Nations and his many commendable initiatives in support of international peace and security.

My thoughts here will turn mainly to the lessons of 50 years of the existence of the United Nations; the revitalization and restructuring of the United Nations; the situation in the subregion of the Great Lakes, particularly Rwanda and Burundi; the efforts for peace in the Middle East; the support of the United Nations system for efforts by Governments to promote and strengthen new or restored democracies; external debt, international economic cooperation and development; disarmament efforts; and, finally, the question of the return or restoration of cultural property to its country of origin.

This year the United Nations is commemorating its fiftieth anniversary. When it was founded, it set itself goals that corresponded to the enthusiasm, hopes and needs that emerged with the end of a devastating war whose traumatic effects have not yet faded away entirely.

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Those goals were to maintain international peace and security, guarantee justice and human rights, foster social progress and establish better living conditions in greater freedom.

Where do we stand today?

A fiftieth anniversary is an important milestone in the life of persons, institutions and nations. A person who has made nothing of his life by the time he is 50 is not likely to set a new course for his life afterwards. An institution that after 50 years has done nothing to attain the objectives it set when it was founded inevitably raises the question of its viability and the usefulness of its existence. A nation that has done nothing for its people in 50 years must surely step back and re-examine everything — its political leaders, programmes, social projects, management and methods.

Fortunately, this is not the case of the United Nations. It has some outstanding accomplishments to its credit. It has achieved real successes and made real efforts in the areas of economic and social development, decolonization, human rights, development and peace-keeping. Its work in establishing norms indisputably represents the highest aspirations of man, of all mankind and all peoples, for a world free from war, threats, intimidation, poverty, oppression and suffering.

Today, therefore, the United Nations must preserve and consolidate its accomplishments while also adapting itself to face the new challenges borne in the wake of the astonishing transformations the world has undergone since the end of the Second World War.

For those of us from Africa, decolonization was an extremely important page in this story. What would decolonization have been without the United Nations, particularly the adoption of resolution 1514 (XV), the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples? What would have happened in South Africa without the mobilization by the United Nations of the entire international community against the scourge of apartheid, and without its support for the heroic and legitimate struggle of the South African people under the leadership of the recognized liberation movements, particularly the African National Congress (ANC)?

In Zaire we have not forgotten that 34 years and 10 days ago, striving to promote peace and restore and maintain the political independence and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is today Zaire, one of the most devoted servants of the United Nations, its late Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, died at Ndola.

We have not forgotten that from July 1960 to June 1964 the United Nations Operation in the Congo represented the largest assistance programme undertaken by the United Nations up to that time.

And so it is thanks to this major contribution by the United Nations that Zaire preserved its unity and territorial integrity. Let me extend to the United Nations the deep appreciation of the Zairian people for this. That page in our history, which is also a page in the history of the United Nations, reminds us that our people paid a heavy price for peace, and it made a pledge that the generations must hand down from one to another: no more civil war; no more secessions because of tribal, inter-ethnic or power conflicts; a firm commitment to peace and dialogue for development, whatever the nature or the intensity of our internal differences.

That is why we gave the name of Dag Hammarskjöld to an important bridge in the city of Kinshasa, to pay tribute to the United Nations by immortalizing the memory of the Secretary-General who died on the battlefield in the struggle for peace. The symbol of the bridge derives from our understanding of the message of the United Nations. As an opening on the world and forum of nations, is not the United Nations, with its message of peace and dialogue, building a bridge between nations?

And yet, despite the outstanding progress indisputably made throughout the world, many other things have also happened. The cold war has ended without this being much help to the development process in the countries of the South, particularly in Africa, where poverty has increased in a worsening economic and social situation.

In the wake of this worsening situation, Africa, in particular, is experiencing the reappearance of diseases which had been eradicated and the appearance of new endemic diseases, without having the necessary resources to cope with them.

Decolonization is virtually over now. Apartheid has been abolished, and Africa, facing the new challenges of democratization and development, seized by the fever of democratization, is undergoing irreversible change accompanied by new difficulties.

At the international level, new kinds of domination are emerging, and could lead to the same results as those of the past, if we are not careful. Will "globalization" of people's behaviour and standardization of reflexes and needs imprison freedom, stifle identities and crush the cultural expression of peoples?

There has been no Third World War, but, as in former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Burundi and elsewhere, a new kind of war has emerged, based on ethnic and tribal "cleansing", tragic consequences for security, peace, the environment and the development of nations that are very disturbing.

A new kind of international crime is engulfing Africa and the world: violence — attacks on individuals and their property, armed robbery and highway robbery; economic and financial crime — counterfeiting, money-laundering, illicit drug trafficking, large-scale fraud in commodities and so forth; political crime — fundamentalism and international terrorism, which take us back to the times of the pirates and the corsairs. Of course the telegraph, the telephone, air travel, radio, television, computers and videos have done a great deal to shrink distances, but they have also helped to strengthen the forces of disorder.

Multilateral cooperation, development financing and the spirit of international solidarity have all been frittered away. The new international economic order has not emerged, and bilateral cooperation has been halted for various reasons, some political in many countries, such as Zaire, at the precise moment when those countries are faced with a sharp reduction in financial resources. The conditions attached to development aid are more stringent than ever, and assistance for democratization, strongly encouraged at the La Baule Summit, is also subject to conditionalities.

The phenomenon of refugees and displaced persons is now unprecedented in scope.

A century of hope, particularly the last half of the century, would thus seem to be ending on a note of despair when we look at what the causes of the new threat to world peace in general and peace in Africa in particular are: armed conflicts, serious internal struggles, poverty, unemployment, inequality, discrimination, intolerance, policies of exclusion, the struggle against State despotism, political and social failures, and so on.

To those who are seeking refuge from tyranny we can also add — on our continent those who are fleeing anarchy. The tragic fate of persons displaced because of civil war or violence is one of the major humanitarian problems of our age. There are many armed conflicts today which derive from the struggle between communities swept along by intolerance.

It is therefore imperative that the members of the international community shoulder their responsibilities, help each other and act together to reverse these negative trends.

As the Secretary-General of the United Nations noted on 20 October 1994, quite rightly:

> "Societies that used to think they were completely autonomous now know that they are very closely linked to one another. The life of each individual, wherever he may come from, is today part of a planetary whole. Today it is recognized that the loftiest objectives of mankind — peace, justice and prosperity — can be attained only if an increasingly broadly agreed effort is made. And then a whole series of new problems whose worldwide dimensions are quite clear demand solutions that no one country or group of countries can find in isolation."

In order to cope with the new challenges facing us all, with the problems of development, peace and security, the United Nations has to rethink its methods, its organization, and its effectiveness.

The influx of nearly 3 million Rwandese refugees to eastern Zaire, about which I shall speak later, revealed to us some of the shortcomings of the United Nations system faced with new challenges.

First, 30,000 armed men belonging to the former armed forces of Rwanda came to Zaire on 14 July 1994, and obviously we were not expecting them. They came to regions of North and South Kivu following the civil war in Rwanda. After being disarmed, they were supposed to be taken care of. But by whom? Problems arose as to their status.

Were they prisoners of war? Zaire was not at war with Rwanda, we were told. Were they war detainees? "No", we were told by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), "they are not within our competence." Are they, then, political refugees? "No", the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) replied. "Men in military uniform

are not political refugees, and so they do not fall within our competence."

And so, the 30,000 military men of the former Rwandan armed forces began to take care of themselves, to the detriment of the villagers and local populations, while the United Nations system looked on, powerless.

Secondly, at the behest of the Secretary-General and the international community, we agreed to move them far away from our border with Rwanda, for obvious reasons. So we found sites in Shaba, Maniema and Equateur. Joint United Nations-Zaire evaluation missions were sent to these regions.

Assuming that there were three people in each family, we identified 90,000 individuals belonging to the former Rwandan Army to be moved from the Rwandan border.

Having seen this evaluation, the United Nations declared the cost exorbitant, and the Secretary-General was unable to find the financial resources needed. So, the idea was abandoned and the United Nations asked Zaire to take appropriate security measures and to keep the 30,000 military men where they were, namely on the border with Rwanda.

But, leaving them there made the Kigali Government nervous about possible destabilization, and so it began spreading unfounded accusations against Zaire. Without checking the facts at all, the United Nations then recognized Kigali's claims and lifted the arms embargo on Rwanda which had been established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1011 (1995) of 16 August 1995, in order to help that country protect itself against some hypothetical threat, but the United Nations has done nothing at all about the 30,000 military men left to be cared for by Zaire without any assistance.

And what is more, after lifting the arms embargo on Rwanda on 16 August 1995 so that it could arm itself and deal with the threat of destabilization from Zaire, the Security Council adopted resolution 1013 (1995) two weeks later setting up an international Commission of Inquiry to look into allegations that the former Rwandan Government forces were being trained and supplied with weapons from Zaire in order to destabilize Rwanda. This is all quite astonishing, not least because the highest level of the collective security system of the United Nations was involved. I myself have served on the Security Council. I was President during the Malvinas war and I have always believed that at that level of responsibility, matters should be considered with the utmost care.

Either the Security Council has proof and takes action, the setting up of an investigative commission being now irrelevant; or the Security Council has no proof, so it investigates and takes a decision after it has checked the facts. The credibility of our Organization is at stake here. These are just two cases showing the inability of the United Nations to deal with the new challenges.

The much-needed revitalization of the United Nations depends on the interest and the efficacy it shows in dealing with conflicts and complex situations that call for its intervention.

The same holds true for its restructuring. Fifty years after its inception, the United Nations needs to adjust and adapt to the new challenges facing the world today, including economic and social development; political conflicts against a backdrop of ethnic cleansing; changes affecting international relations; and the changes that have taken place in the world since 24 October 1945; the need to enlarge the circle of decision-makers in matters of international peace and security; the need to ensure more equitable and balanced representation of the nations of the world on the Security Council and to avoid any danger of the collective security system being manipulated; and the inadequacy of the financial resources to cover the scale of the tasks facing this universal Organization.

This therefore seems to be the cost of ensuring a new dynamism in United Nations activities, for this changing world is not exactly reassuring. And many events are taking place without the nations of the world knowing why or how. There is a danger that political lobbies may use the cogs of the United Nations machinery to their own ends, using their influence, without any counterbalance, and that certain Governments may bring pressure to bear on the United Nations. This slippery slope was certainly not foreseen when the collective security system was established.

The Republic of Zaire welcomes the current peace process in the Middle East. We noted with satisfaction the agreements signed between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on the one hand and between Israel and Jordan on the other. To our mind, these are important steps towards the establishment of an overall peace.

Zaire wholeheartedly supports the bilateral negotiations and the progress made thus far in the peace process and urges all parties to implement the agreements. We trust that efforts will be made to ensure that further negotiations are held soon between Israel and other Arab States.

Emphasizing the need to ensure progress in Arab-Israeli negotiations in other directions of the peace process, the Republic of Zaire would urge the establishment of dialogue between the protagonists, and encourage them to do their utmost to reach agreements that reflect the legitimate aspirations of each side.

This is the only way in which we will be able to overcome an age-old distrust and create the conditions needed for progress and development in the Middle East, in the spirit of peace that has been so long in coming.

The situation in the Great Lakes subregion in Central Africa is of great concern in the Republic of Zaire because it calls into question the peace, stability, security and development, not just of Rwanda and Burundi, but of the region as a whole.

The Republic of Zaire, I wish to emphasize, has no particular problem with Rwanda or with Burundi. Yesterday, Zaire offered refuge to the Tutsis who were driven from their home and today we are offering refuge to those who have left their country. A human tragedy of an unprecedented scale is unfolding in this region. Everything borders on the extreme, including the urge to exclude other people; the hatred that pits the fraternal enemies, the Tutsis and the Hutus, against each other; the dramatic peregrinations of people who are hounded because of their ethnic origins or political opinions; the ease with which human lives are destroyed, including the lives of children, women, old people, and intellectuals; the instinct for violence; the scale of the flow of people searching for shelter, fleeing certain death; the imbalance in the division of political and military power and the rejection of democratic principles in the running of the country.

As former Tutsi refugees from 1959 and from 1962-1963 are returning home, thanks to the return to power of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR), it is now the turn of millions of Hutus, who represent 85 per cent of the population, to leave their country, abandoning their property, their land and their houses to the newcomers.

The Tutsis, who were forced out in the 1960s at the height of the Hutus' power, and who account for 15 per cent of the population, took 30 years to prepare their forcible return to power. How long does the international community want to wait until it is the turn of the Hutu majority to return to power using force?

Every time there is this kind of swing, new human dramas will be condemned and major problems of reinsertion and reinstallation will emerge.

In this cycle of deliberate violence, it will become increasingly impossible to say who is innocent of something and who is not guilty of something.

Faced with a tragedy of such magnitude, the international community and the United Nations seem to us to be rather helpless. Who then will take the necessary measures to help these countries, to prevent their situation from deteriorating, to preserve peace and security in the region and to prevent further genocide?

The resolutions and declarations adopted to date by the United Nations do not take account of all the realities on the ground. They do not cover all the aspects of the tragedy that I have just described that exists in Rwanda, Burundi and in the subregion of the Great Lakes as a whole. And these resolutions and declarations have political implications that contribute to the region's instability.

No purpose can be served at the stage where we are today by quoting lofty principles or deciding who is right on the basis of who can best present their version of the situation and the facts. Instead, we must objectively define the concrete problems facing Rwanda and Burundi as States and take specific measures, within the framework of an overall approach to the question, to ensure the repatriation of refugees; national reconciliation; power-sharing; the establishment of the needed balance in the armies that now constitute the political support of Governments, in order to create republican armed forces; the establishment or revitalization of the democratization process; assistance in reintegrating refugees into society; reconstruction and development assistance for the countries of origin and of asylum; and, finally, the establishment of viable judicial structures, so that there can be some justice. There is indeed a justice problem, and it must be solved.

It is in this spirit that the Republic of Zaire supports the holding of a regional conference on peace, stability and security in the Great Lakes subregion, following the signing of bilateral agreements on the repatriation of

refugees. If this conference is to succeed, it must, for obvious reasons, be planned very carefully. The Government of Zaire welcomed the appointment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations of Ambassador Jesus to the post of Special Envoy. Zaire will cooperate fully with him in order to ensure the success of his mission.

I should like also to draw the Assembly's attention to the fact that the influx of Rwandese refugees into eastern Zaire, an event unheard of since the end of the Second World War, appears to have been relegated to the back pages of international news now that its sensationalist aspect has worn thin. The refugees destroyed a priceless national heritage: the national park of Virunga, a site listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a national treasure. The local flora and fauna — mountain gorillas, elephants and other protected species — were not spared. The environment, the ecology, and basic sanitary and educational infrastructures were destroyed. General Assembly resolution 49/24 of 2 December 1994, on special assistance to countries — including Zaire — receiving refugees to help restore the areas destroyed by the massive presence of refugees, has so far had no impact or follow-up whatsoever.

Zaire, a victim of the tragedy in Rwanda by virtue of their common border, has been accused, with increasing frequency, of attempting to destabilize Rwanda. The accusers are none other than those who wish to use the refugee question to destabilize the Great Lakes area in order to live out their dream of creating a new Ima empire that would challenge the principle, inherited from colonized times, of the inviolability of borders; they would attempt to resolve the ethnic conflicts in the region by distributing land here and there — all this to the detriment of Zaire.

This approach shows that a political issue underlies the whole problem. Either we are dealing with refugees, in the true sense of the word, and then their massive presence and the destruction they have wrought in our country cause our people a serious safety and security problem — which would entitle us to invoke the exception envisaged in the Declaration on Territorial Asylum; or we are dealing with people quietly expelled from their country for political and ethnic reasons, in which case, since no constitution in the world would allow a country to expel its citizens for ethnic or political reasons, we do not have to accept these castaways of "ethnic cleansing". That is why, in order that the pretext of Zaire's supposed attempt to destabilize Rwanda not give certain countries the opportunity to carry out a plot against my country, Zaire — in the wake of the lifting of the arms embargo on Rwanda, which was decided on by the Security Council, and in the face of the jeopardizing of our national security and the serious threats that face our population — resorted to one of the existing international instruments concerning refugees, namely General Assembly resolution 2312 (XXII), of 14 December 1967, the Declaration on Territorial Asylum, to urge the international community and the United Nations to shoulder their responsibilities, because Zaire does not have the means to bear alone the burden of the massive presence of refugees in its territory, particularly since it is on the eve of holding elections.

I would recall, since much has been said about this, that the second preambular paragraph of the Declaration on Territorial Asylum states that a person faced with persecution

> "has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution"

and paragraph 1 of article 3 states that such a person shall not be

> "subjected to measures such as rejection at the border or, if he has already entered the territory in which he seeks asylum, expulsion or compulsory return".

Since 1960, Zaire has been taking in refugees from Rwanda — sometimes Tutsi, sometimes Hutu — and we have always followed that provision to the letter. But paragraph 2 of article 3 states:

> "Exception may be made to the foregoing principle only for overriding reasons of national security or in order to safeguard the population, as in the case of a mass influx of persons".

And if a State should decide that, for whatever reason, an exception to that provision is justified, it can

> "consider the possibility of granting to the person concerned an opportunity of going to another State",

and can then bring this matter before the international community.

This is precisely the situation that Zaire found itself in. It decided to be an exception to the principle, and so informed the Secretary-General and the Security Council of the United Nations. Countries wishing to take in these

refugees are welcome to do so, but Zaire refuses to continue to be accused of destabilizing Rwanda simply because we accepted 3 million Rwandese on our land. We wish to cut out at the root the trumped-up charges against our country. In this way, the international community will be able to judge better our determination to live in peace with our neighbours.

However, acceding to the request by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Zaire Government held talks with Mrs. Sadako Ogata, the head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and asked her to organize, on the UNHCR level, a voluntary repatriation, on a massive and uninterrupted scale, of the refugees to their countries of origin, so that by 31 December 1995 all of the refugees would have returned home.

The international community has an obligation to help Rwanda and Burundi to deal with the problems of repatriation and reinsertion of their nationals. During our last meeting in Geneva on 25 September 1995, we agreed with Rwanda's Minister of Rehabilitation and with Mrs. Ogata on the modalities for repatriating the refugees by 31 December, to the tune of 8,000 to 10,000 persons per day, at various points of entry, which were identified — Shangugu, Kiseni or Gibumba.

We can think of no Government that would hesitate as to what course to take if it had to choose between the requirements of international solidarity and those of national security and the protection of its population.

To judge by the information that appears in the international press, the impression that some wish to give of Zaire is that it is a hell where it would not be very pleasant to live.

Zaireans are human beings. Like human beings anywhere, some are good and some are bad, some not so good and not so bad. We are also a people. Whatever one thinks of me personally, or of any other politician in my country, this cannot be allowed to discredit an entire people, or affect the image of my people as a whole.

When many fled the horrors and the violence of war, it was to the "hell" of Zaire that they chose to come and live. But one might well wonder what would become of peace in Central Africa if Zaire were incapable of managing conflicts between tribes — we have more than 450, as well as our other internal political problems — and if it exploded like Rwanda, spilling our 47 million people into neighbouring countries.

For countries such as ours, that have experienced the whole range of turbulence that a people can know — above and beyond the colonial period, which more or less persisted into the first years of independence, and the price of building a post-colonial State in conformity with the aspirations of our people — there is no greater good in the world than peace. Without it, all illusions aside, progress and development are out of the question.

In the name of peace, every State must be fully responsible for its people and must learn to live with its own national contradictions and refrain from obliging others to bear the burden of its incapacity to manage those contradictions. Otherwise, the international community, both at the regional and global levels, must come to its aid to develop its capacity to resolve its problems without inflicting further wounds, and above all without inflicting them on other countries, developing countries like our own, whose resources are needed for other purposes.

The international community thus has the duty and should have the courage to impose peace and reconciliation in the Great Lakes region and state clearly its refusal to countenance the drift towards exclusion and ethnicity.

Zaire shelters many African refugees on its territory and, out of a sense of common humanity and an appreciation of our historic ties with its neighbours, decided to take in our Rwandese brothers. But we can no longer pay for the tragedies that are engulfing our neighbours, with all their economic and security repercussions on our border population.

As I have said, we believe the international community must do all it can to reassure our people by helping the Governments of Rwanda and Burundi to make all the necessary provisions to guarantee the speedy return of the refugees and their reintegration in their homeland. We reaffirm here our resolve to work for the restoration of a climate of peace in our subregion and to make our contribution towards all the efforts at reconciliation aimed at strengthening mutual confidence and security there.

But we can no longer cope alone with those refugees. We can no longer shoulder alone the

humanitarian burden imposed upon us by humanitarian principles and the agreements we have signed.

On behalf of my Government, I should like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Sadako Ogata and the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner for Refugees for the efforts they have been making with limited resources to solve the problem of refugees in the Great Lakes region and for their assistance in rehabilitating the Bukavu airport and the port of Uvira.

Our thanks also go to the member States of the European Union which have pledged contributions for the repair of roads in North and South Kivu in advance of the organization of elections.

In the 1960s, few governing structures in the countries of the South demonstrated particular interest in or attachment to the close connection that exists between democracy and development; democracy and human rights; and human rights and development.

With the passage of time, the difficult experience of management has taught us some lessons. It makes more sense to manage growth and wealth than degradation and poverty; it is not enough to consume what others produce, but one should learn to produce what one consumes; inheriting infrastructure and ways of life conceived by others is one thing, but conceiving one's own communal approach to life and to fix one's own limits for oneself is another.

In all things, it is the individual that remains the focus and the medium. An individual whose rights and freedoms are flouted, who is aware that he does not count in national affairs, drifts away from the ruling circles and from the national effort for development imposed on him from above, from policies out of touch with his own daily life. Many of our countries have, in the course of the last 30 years, experienced the indifference of the individual whose rights and freedoms were left out of account.

Today, in the light of the economic and social collapse, that link between human rights, democracy and development is understood and acknowledged. It is not just because of what was said at the conference at La Baule, but because of the importance and the intensity of the message we heard at La Baule, that the process of democratization in Africa must also be understood as an act of awareness, of self-awareness. That is how this process becomes truly irreversible.

In the Republic of Zaire, five years of difficult transition have done considerable damage at the political, economic and social levels. That is why we have not been able to play our full part in the arena of free nations. Domestically, we have not been fully able to shoulder our responsibilities to deal with the socio-economic requirements of our people.

But now we have decided to bury the past and to assume our duties to the full and to offer our contribution to the solution of problems facing the international community, if it be only through our analysis of the situation.

We intend to strengthen ties with all friendly countries, particularly our traditional friends, in finding together appropriate solutions to the problems which have beset our relations. At the same time, we mean to give sustained, real and useful meaning to the diversification of our external relations in the field of development.

Internally, through another kind of management, of which the Prime Minister spoke in September 1994, and in the context of restored liberties, we intend to meet the aspirations of our people to a better quality of life. This is a matter of priority.

Democracy does not mean licence, and the state of laws implies that all citizens are subject without discrimination to the law. In our countries, educating as many people as possible, changing the way people think, raising the general level of education and political and democratic awareness — all of these draw upon the limited financial resources of the State to strengthen, following the forthcoming elections, democracy and the state of law and of progress.

While the Government is seeking to create conditions of legal security and an economic environment favourable to the creation of fruitful partnerships and mutually advantageous cooperation, we want to count on our external partners and the international financial institutions — in short, on the international community — to take up with us the challenge of development. The present institutional order in our country conforms to the desires of our people as expressed through its political class as a whole, and is designed to extricate us from the crisis rationally and methodically. But our efforts alone will not suffice. That is why we seek aid to accompany the process of democratization, because, unfortunately, the support of the people for political scenarios is also important to finding a solution to their daily concerns.

As the Manila Declaration emphasizes, by mutual support, the internal and external forces that endanger the new democracy can be overcome. The United Nations thus has a duty to support efforts by Governments, including ours, to promote or consolidate new or re-established democracies.

The eradication of extreme poverty in all countries, particularly developing countries, has become one of the priority development goals of the 1990s, in keeping with resolutions 47/196 and 47/197. The year 1996 has been proclaimed International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. This honours our Organization.

Over the past 50 years, the United Nations has made serious efforts to intensify international economic cooperation. In particular, it has adopted the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States and the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order based on justice and equity. None the less, the trade relations between the developed and the developing countries continue to show an imbalance which, having been allowed to persist and grow, is today a real threat to peace everywhere.

In Africa, efforts made at the national, subregional and regional levels to break out of the vicious cycle of poverty have not been sufficiently supported by the international community. Stricken by an unprecedented crisis, Africa has for years groaned under the weight of its debt. It has suffered the effects of lowered commodity prices, of the deterioration in the terms of trade, of protectionism in the developed countries, and of a drop in official development assistance.

The debt is a major hindrance to economic growth and development in Africa. The heavy debt burden absorbs one third of our countries' export earnings and represents a serious drain on resources which would otherwise have served to finance growth and development.

In order to implement economic reform, stabilization and structural adjustment programmes and to eradicate poverty, the debtor developing countries need to mobilize the resources necessary to their efforts. They also need new supplies of financial resources and concessional financial assistance from creditor countries and multilateral financial institutions.

Debt relief is becoming increasingly unavoidable if national resources are to be freed up to support activities necessary to social development. The responsibilities which debt and debt servicing impose on our developing countries are so alarming that we must apply ourselves with particular inventiveness and urgency to the search for solutions to the problems to which they give rise. They require a leap of imagination.

That is why we feel it to be necessary and urgent to assess the progress made in the various United Nations bodies in the establishment of a new international economic order, so that, in response to the results of this assessment, we can take appropriate measures to promote development in developing countries and international economic cooperation.

The Republic of Zaire hopes that, at this session, the General Assembly, in the framework of agenda item 96 (c), on the external debt crisis and development, will take into consideration the recommendations made by the non-aligned countries at their meeting in Jakarta from 13 to 15 August 1994. It may find therein ways and means of resolving the problem of the debt of developing countries and of promoting their harmonious development.

Everyone knows that the external debt of the developing countries cannot be absorbed at its current level without the cooperation of the developed countries and the international financial institutions, which must agree on the establishment of a new world economic order that would take the vital interests of its partners into account. The countries of the North would also benefit by making an additional effort to understand that the debtor countries can only honour their debt-service obligations according to their financial capacities. In the current situation, compelling them to meet all their financial commitments could end up in a collapse of their economies, despite all their good-faith efforts.

1995 has been proclaimed World Year of Peoples' Commemoration of the Victims of the Second World War and Member States have been called upon solemnly to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. This year we will also consider and assess mid-way the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade.

How can we commemorate the victims of the Second World War today without also giving thought to the victims of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi and elsewhere? When will we commemorate the victims of those wars? There is no destruction of human life that is more appropriate

than any other. The United Nations was supposed to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war — but which war, what kind of war? True, the kind of war fought from 1939 to 1945 has not recurred, but can we assert today that mankind has mastered the arts of peace? It is in men's minds that the instinct for war must be replaced by the spirit of peace if the world is to be saved from the scourge of war. If it is not, any progress we have made will remain fragile.

The United Nations offers us the opportunity to consider from a global perspective the questions of war, peace and security. It remains an essential instrument for achieving the objectives of arms control and disarmament. But situations of conflict and tension must be prevented more effectively. An efficient system of collective security that allows States to reduce their military capacities must be put in place. It is no longer enough to limit arms and promote disarmament by regulating weaponry and establishing the balance of power at lower levels. We feel that that is not the way to achieve the goal of development for all, which is the new major challenge facing the United Nations.

We must reinvent trust in international relations. We must make a new creative effort to ensure that disarmament goes hand-in-hand with the achievement of peace, security and development throughout the world. In this context, we believe that the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction — the first global and truly verifiable disarmament treaty — offers a worthwhile avenue. Indeed, it carries a security gain for all States through the total elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. We hope that this Convention will soon have the required number of ratifications to enter into force and thus become a standard shared by all States.

Since the inclusion in the General Assembly's agenda, in 1973, of the item on the restitution of works of art to countries victims of expropriation, we have noted with satisfaction the continued and growing interest in this item shown by Members of the United Nations. In addition to bilateral negotiations for the restitution of cultural property, we now have the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, to which the number of States Parties continues to grow.

However, the quantity and quality of the cultural property "returned" or restored are insignificant compared to the importance which the General Assembly attaches to the item. Promises made to Zaire by countries which still hold works of art and other cultural treasures belonging to Zaire, as well as museum pieces and archives that are essential to preserving and nourishing cultural values, have not been fully kept.

We call on the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to do everything possible to encourage those countries to honour their obligations so that the objectives of the United Nations and the countries of origin can be met.

I wish the General Assembly every success to the work of its fiftieth session and I wish the United Nations a long life.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Paraguay, His Excellency Mr. Luis María Ramírez Boettner.

Mr. Ramírez Boettner (Paraguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to express my best wishes to you, Sir, and to congratulate you on your election. I assure you of Paraguay's most complete cooperation.

I also wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to Ambassador Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire for the way in which he guided the work of the General Assembly at the last session.

At the same time I am pleased to convey to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the congratulations that I bring on behalf of the Government and people of Paraguay for the commendable efforts that have been made. I wish to express once again, on behalf of Paraguay and the President of the Republic, Juan Carlos Wasmosy, our full support for the United Nations, of which Paraguay was one of the founders.

We are living in an exceptional year, an important one, marking the first 50 years of the United Nations.

I myself was one of the fortunate witnesses of the birth of the Organization after the Second World War. Life then led me to work for 25 years as a staff member within the structure that was created. I believe that the United Nations has essentially fulfilled the aspirations placed in it for peace, security, efforts to establish a more equitable international legal order, and the

commitment to development for all the peoples of the world.

Undoubtedly, we must admit that in spite of the efforts made, we cannot say that we have been as successful as we would have wished in the sphere of political achievements.

On the contrary, in the economic and social fields, in which the Secretary-General and the different agencies of the United Nations system can take their own decisions, there is an immense wealth of great achievements, some of which are truly extraordinary. By way of example we would like to mention the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, successes as regards decolonization, invariable and universal support for individual and collective human rights, the openness and liberalization of international trade, the immense mass of statistical data collected and published in the fields of demography, economics, health, education, and so on.

Without attempting to be exhaustive I should like to emphasize our admiration for the world summits — for the defence and protection of the environment in Rio de Janeiro; the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo; the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen; the World Summit for Children; the recently concluded Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing; and the equally hoped-for and awaited United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). The contribution that these summits have made to mankind is truly historic.

I should also like to highlight my Government's appreciation for the report of the independent Working Group on the future of the United Nations, many of whose observations and recommendations we share.

Without attempting to elaborate on the immense agenda of this session we would like to emphasize the need that Paraguay feels for a greater adaptation of the United Nations to the new and changing realities at the same time we support, where possible, the greater strengthening of the entire system, not only to preserve peace through law but also to strengthen security with a view to the harmonized and integral development of all peoples the world over.

In this context Paraguay continues to support the reform of the organs of the United Nations, strengthening the General Assembly, democratizing the Security Council with the presence of more non-permanent members and restricting the power of veto. Among the new permanent members it would be vital to ensure that there is equitable representation for Latin America and other continents among whose representatives we mention by way of example Japan, Germany and Brazil.

All this would be impossible if States in accordance with agreed contributions were not to confront positively and conscientiously the serious problem of financing the system. In keeping with its means Paraguay is up to date in the payment of its assessment and we would like to emphasize the need to rationalize resources and improve the administrative efficiency of the United Nations.

We have also said in the past that the allocation of funds for programmes and projects in the world by the United Nations is unbalanced in that only 8.66 per cent of the programmes are allocated to countries of Latin America whereas other regions have 50.42 per cent and 40.67 per cent respectively.

Paraguay is following closely the enormous efforts being made by the United Nations concerning peace and development.

As regards the maintenance of peace, Paraguay wishes to refer to a few specific points.

Regarding agenda item 27, I am pleased at the continued economic openness in the sister republic of Cuba. It is a pleasure to recall that the great hero, poet, political leader, writer and teacher, José Martí was Consul General of Paraguay in New York and that his contribution to my homeland was at the time, and continues to be fruitful.

In this context Paraguay reiterates its full support for the Rio Group as regards its declaration in favour of lifting the embargo on Cuba and we repeat our support for the changes required in accordance with the will of the people and with respect for the self-determination of peoples and the principle of non-intervention.

Regarding the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Paraguay supports the different courses of action promoted by the General Assembly and monitored by the Security Council through the efforts of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other related agencies. My country has not lost hope that the strength of reason and the inspiration of human compassion will, in the near future, alleviate the

enormous suffering and sacrifices of those peoples that are separated now by hatred and violence.

Paraguay shares the concern of the international community regarding the conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi and other parts of the African continent.

The very diverse actions of the United Nations in other parts of the world deserve our respect and our support. Without being exhaustive in our listing we would like to refer to the problems that have existed in El Salvador, Haiti, Iraq, Kuwait, Angola, Mozambique, Somalia, Western Sahara, Liberia, and in Lebanon, Cyprus, Cambodia, Georgia, Tajikistan, and so on. The United Nations is contributing or has contributed actively with observer missions or assistance missions and with peace-keeping forces in a world that is experiencing so much upheaval.

We continue to be hopeful as regards the peace process between Israel and its Arab neighbours in the Middle East. Paraguay is gratified by the recent agreements between Israel and Palestine and we hope that new progress will soon be made in those lands which were the cradle of three universal religions and their magnificent cultures.

Of course Paraguay supports the work of the United Nations with a view to achieving disarmament, whether it be in regard to conventional, biological, chemical or nuclear weapons. In the same context, Paraguay expresses its concern also at the nuclear tests being conducted in different parts of the world.

The struggle against the terrible scourge of terrorism is one shared by Paraguay in an increasingly united framework of international cooperation to eliminate the problem at its very roots.

Paraguay would like to mention its hope that as a result of the talks between the two parties, a just and equitable understanding will be reached to resolve the situation of the Republic of China, in keeping with the principle of universality enshrined in the Charter.

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United Nations cooperation in development implies an enormous restructuring and revitalization effort in the economic, social and other related spheres. In this context we view as very fruitful the cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System and cooperation between the United Nations and other regional groups. Particular emphasis should be placed on horizontal cooperation.

We consider the question of convening an international conference for development to be of vital importance as one of the measures needed to ensure long-term economic growth in all countries, particularly the developing countries.

Recent financial disturbances on our continent, where debt, loans and speculative capital combined to create a widespread and only recently resolved crisis, oblige us to reassert the fundamental demand for sustainable development and for effective and broad international economic cooperation, as was highlighted in the conclusions of the Rio Group at its recent meeting at Quito.

Paraguay is pleased to affirm before the Assembly that its democratic process is continuing to grow stronger day by day. In accordance with the National Constitution, the Government has guaranteed and will continue to guarantee all freedoms and compliance with the covenants on civil and political rights we have signed.

We cannot fail to ncte that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, in its 1995 conclusions with regard to our country, has recognized Paraguay's achievements in this field. At the same time, we cannot deny the enormous needs to which we must respond.

Democratic transition in our country has not received the hoped-for material support. Apart from the contribution of the European Community and Japan, we have had to deal with our social and economic problems out of our resources. That alone explains why we have been unable to resolve all social conflict.

In shouldering the task of coming up with answers, we repeat that we shall be doing so without digressing from the moral principles of fairness and the principles of the United Nations, but we do ask for greater support for our development from the international community. For that reason the people of Paraguay were shocked — and, we must say, indignant — to learn of the attempts by certain European and United States banks to bring before the Swiss courts claims of debts that were never sanctioned by Paraguay authorities and that arose out of fraudulent operations that were carried out in Italy and that are now being investigated and judged in those countries.

Paraguay has honoured and will continue to honour each and every one of its international commitments, but we can never agree to the payment of debts unrelated to our legislation and contrary to every principle of law.

The recent Conference of the Rio Group at Quito came out vigorously in favour of productive investment and discouraged speculation, which does not create employment and which is unfortunately characteristic of today's climate. In this connection, our Government is continuing with its plans concerning the Paraguay-Paraná waterway. This waterway is not a new project or design to be created from scratch but, on the contrary, something that already exists as a work of nature and that must be improved, without curtailing it, by means of river channels that will be suitable for open navigation at all times for the transit of goods and persons. The ecological Summit at Rio de Janeiro strengthened Paraguay's awareness of the need to protect the environment, and since this waterway already exists in its natural state, the environment — and I would emphasize this — will in no way be damaged.

As of 1 January 1995 the Southern Cone Common Market, MERCOSUR, which is a customs union, has complemented and integrated the economies of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay into a market covering over 200 million persons and 12 million square kilometres, the world's fourth largest regional entity. The Treaty of Asunción, which brought MERCOSUR into being five years ago, is based on two key principles, namely, international democracy and international solidarity. It is a flexible system of integration that seeks to include the economies of the sister Republics of Bolivia and Chile and that may eventually be joined with the Andean Pact.

Paraguay is very enthusiastic about the fruitful negotiations under way with the European Union aimed at establishing a broad zone of free trade that would cover Europe and MERCOSUR. Under the outstanding presidency of Spain a broad framework agreement is now being studied in the European Union, and we hope it can be signed in Madrid at the end of this year.

Paraguay is firmly convinced of the need to move forward with the process of creating in MERCOSUR such supranational entities as an administration commission and a law tribunal.

Paraguay's pro-tem presidency of MERCOSUR saw the entry into force of a customs union that has undergone steady development, as well as the initiation of the understanding with the European Union. We have just handed the presidency over to Oriental Republic of Uruguay.

Within MERCOSUR, Paraguay is carrying out a free-trade policy, the most open such policy in South America, corresponding as it does to article 8 of the Charter of the International Monetary Fund, which provides for the totally unrestricted movement of capital.

Paraguay is aware that it must reduce the size of its armed forces so that the sums invested in it can be transferred to the social sector, but without losing sight of its need for security and without impairing the efficiency of those forces. Fortunately, there is understanding of the various mandates and the cooperation needed to make this change. In Paraguay at the present time we are examining the possibility of participation by our armed forces in United Nations peace-keeping operations, and we have begun to send officers to participate in training courses.

We appreciate the financing of the programmes and projects in our country by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the Inter-American Bank for Development. We are grateful to the International Monetary Fund for its very effective guidance.

Drug trafficking is not a problem in Paraguay, which is neither a centre of production nor a consumer market. The only problem it causes is created by the transit towards the industrialized countries, which is facilitated by our long border. Through its own efforts, and without external assistance, Paraguay is combating this scourge and has achieved significant successes. Public and private corruption is the scourge of the whole world today, and it is being tackled by our Government. In this connection, Paraguay firmly supports the draft inter-American convention against corruption submitted by the Government of Venezuela to its partners in the Rio Group.

Paraguay is proud of its contribution to and membership in the Rio Group. This is a flexible organ created as a way to resolve a precise conflict, and it has provided such good results that it has continued to exist as a framework for broad, political dialogue that is becoming increasingly relevant and important. Its establishment by founding members of the Organization of American States (OAS) has given it a particularly coherent and timely political standing. We are encouraged at the practical turn taken by the Summit Meeting of American Presidents at Miami, especially at the Ministerial Meeting at Denver, Colorado.

Before concluding my statement I wish to say that the Government of Paraguay wants to highlight the positive understanding achieved with the Republic of Argentina for solving the ecological problem of the Pilcomayo river. The sister Republic of Bolivia has now joined us in a tripartite agreement to redress this problem in an area ripe for regional development, thanks to the cooperation of the European Union.

Last year we mentioned the need to create within the United Nations system a fund for progress in science and technology, particularly for the developing countries. In this regard we would like to appeal especially to our partners from the South. Without science and technology for our economic, social and political elites, development is impossible. The gap between the industrialized countries and our own countries in this respect is so large that it is a matter of fairness and necessity to reduce it. Above all, it is question of bringing about a free transfer of agricultural and food technology that can make it possible for us to live in social peace.

As the United Nations completes its 50 years of existence, it has passed many milestones in human history. Knotty problems that seemed insoluble yesterday have now been left behind.

A nuclear crisis, which threatened almost two generations of the human race, now seems unthinkable. The world can no longer be explained from the standpoint of two ideologies whose triumph or defeat could be decided only by a major war, which was fortunately avoided.

The contest between authoritarianism and freedom is over. Although there are large areas of the world where fundamental rights are not enjoyed, the benefits of freedom enshrined in the declarations and covenants of the United Nations are not at issue.

We cannot forget that since 1819 there have been 353 wars, but none of them has been between well-established democracies.

There is a widespread and growing awareness that many major issues can be resolved only by pooling our efforts. The issues of the environment, women, education and children, as well as a large majority of the other issues on this grand Assembly's agenda, are impossible to resolve through the efforts of one nation-State. This fact is confirmed every day. Today we forget that not long ago, when our Organization already existed, there was no debate over the internal affairs of countries and that no international intervention was allowable. If the Charter were rewritten today it would be startling to see the changes Article 2, paragraph 7.

All this happened in the era of the United Nations. We still lack the perspective to assess it, but we are sure that the result is positive. We have not gone backwards; we have not even stopped.

We are again hearing voices that emphasize the defects of the Organization. The criticism would seem true if we lost sight of the major changes for the good of mankind that have come about with the existence and the help of our institution. Through me, my country reiterates its support for vital and necessary reforms. This is our responsibility, and it is the best tribute we can pay to those who conceived, shaped and developed the Organization.

But these changes will be valid only if we remember the principle of the sense of history, as Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali pointed out. In recent years we Paraguayans, in setting out anew on the path of democracy, believed that we were impelled not only by a desire to improve our living conditions, obtain the benefits of progress and ensure well-being for all. We understood that we were part of a shared adventure with universal roots, that we were a nation that, in order to understand itself, needed to understand others.

For this reason, we stand before you with a conviction that I hope will last for ever: that the great majority of people believe that with the United Nations it will be possible some day be possible, perhaps very soon, to find new forms of cosmopolitanism. That sense of history obliges us to think once again in terms of the world — this will, of course, be our new activity — so that morality may triumph in politics and that the separation of the two will have been but a moment in the history of our race.

To paraphrase Hegel, we can say, "What are we? What shall we become?"

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, His Excellency Mr. José Angel Gurria.

Mr. Gurria (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Since the United Nations was founded, Mexico has made a committed and enthusiastic contribution to its positive development. Without exception, Mexico has effectively promoted the principles, the letter and the spirit of the San Francisco Charter. Today Mexico confirms before the world its unswerving commitment to peace, development and collective understanding, which are the inspiration of the United Nations.

Mr. Srithirath (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We have had five decades of collective diplomacy, controversy over the scope and limitations of multilateral action, difficult adaptations for the United Nations to a world that is constantly changing at a dizzying pace; five decades in which the ship of the United Nations has often been pounded by the waves of intolerance, of the arbitrary and irrational use of power and force and of overt violations of the norms of international law. Despite the pounding it has received, the ship remains afloat. Today it has 185 nations on board, and it is still mankind's best alternative for bringing future generations to a safer and stabler port than the one we inherited at the end of the Second World War.

In these first 50 years the foundations have been laid for building a new civilization at a higher level for peaceful coexistence between nations. Never before in history has mankind possessed an instrument as universal and spirited as the United Nations. The general debate in this fiftieth anniversary year is an appropriate occasion for us to pledge ourselves to preserving the achievements of the United Nations and outlining the form it should take in the next century. Clearly, the world cannot do without the United Nations, but it is also obvious that its

structures are in need of far-reaching changes in order to be up to the challenges of the present day.

The recurring topic is the need to reform the Organization, and the main issues are, among others, the following:

First, Mexico attaches priority to the examination of the reform of the Security Council and has proposed an increase in the Council's membership, strictly respecting the principle of equitable geographical distribution in the context of a genuine reform of its working methods, including reconsideration of the use and the existence of the veto power.

A second issue is the limitations on the role of the Secretary-General, which have very significantly curtailed his ability to act.

Thirdly, there is the failure of a large number of Member States to meet their financial obligations.

A fourth issue is the extreme bureaucratization of some of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system and the lack of coordination of their activities, as well as the lack of political support by the Members for other agencies, such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), which carry out very useful functions.

The enthusiasm generated by the end of the bipolar confrontation has lessened due to the emergence of vast and painful ethnic, religious and regional conflicts, especially in the former Yugoslavia and in several countries in Africa -- conflicts whose resolution we must urgently seek. Fortunately, there are reasons for optimism, such as the progress achieved in the negotiations in the Middle East, which we must acknowledge and continue to encourage. We view with special satisfaction the progress of the negotiations toward a firm and lasting peace in Guatemala, to which the Secretary-General and the Group of Friends, among them Mexico, have greatly contributed.

The issue of disarmament has for many years been a priority on the agenda of the international community. Just a few months ago, we agreed on the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. At the same time, we reaffirmed by consensus important commitments relating to disarmament, including agreement by all nuclear weapon States to make systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the goal of eliminating these weapons within a programme of general and complete disarmament. We now need to establish deadlines for the attainment of these objectives and remain vigilant, through the review mechanism we also approved at the Conference, in monitoring the commitments entered into.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of members of the international community are clearly dissatisfied with the pace of the negotiations on the subject. It would seem that the necessary political will does not exist to take advantage of the detente between the major military Powers to move ahead in the sphere of disarmament. Rather, the fear persists that this process may be reversible. This of course makes it advisable to redouble efforts to make progress on disarmament issues, as well as to devote attention to a specific programme of mutual confidence-building measures among States.

The conclusion in 1996 of a treaty of universal validity proclaiming an absolute ban on nuclear-weapon tests in all environments is the priority task in the disarmament field. This treaty, currently being negotiated in Geneva, should be opened for signature before the beginning of the next session of the General Assembly. With a view to speeding up the attainment of that objective, all the nuclear-weapon States should embrace the "zero option", as the United States of America, France and the United Kingdom have already done.

The Government of Mexico is extremely concerned at the recent decisions by the People's Republic of China and France to conduct nuclear-weapon tests despite repeated calls by the international community for them to desist from such action. We condemn those tests and reiterate our respectful but firm appeal to these countries to proclaim a moratorium which will remain in force until the nuclear test-ban treaty is concluded. The States parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the member States of the Treaty of Rarotonga will be submitting a draft resolution to that end for consideration by the Assembly. Moreover, we share the view of those States that have indicated their support for the immediate launching of negotiations to ensure the prohibition of the production of fissionable materials for nuclear weapons, which was indeed another of the commitments agreed to by consensus at the Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Along with the efforts to bring about nuclear disarmament, impetus must also be given to the process of conventional disarmament. Mexico supports and is encouraging the negotiation of conventional-disarmament

agreements which will ensure transparency and limit the manufacture and trade in and transfer of certain types of conventional weapons, both regionally and worldwide.

In the Conference on conventional weapons now under way in Vienna, Mexico will promote the prohibition of the use, production, storage and transfer of land-mines and will submit proposals on the use of small-calibre weapons, cluster bombs, flechettes and air-fueled explosives.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations give us an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved and on what we need to change. It should be recalled that the past year has also marked the fiftieth anniversary of the institutions established at the memorable Bretton Woods meeting. The agreements that set up the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have promoted economic cooperation over the five decades following their establishment. The globalization of production, of trade and, above all, of finance, is undoubtedly a stimulant to economic development. Yet it could cause crises which these financial institutions are not at present able to meet effectively.

Mexico recognizes and is grateful for the support received from the international community in the financial crisis it has experienced. The enormous efforts being made every day by the Mexican people to resolve this situation would have had to be even greater if we had not been able to count on the support of the international community, both from friendly Governments and from multilateral agencies. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that the Mexican crisis has afforded evidence of the vulnerability of the international financial system as a whole.

For the modern State, and especially for developing countries, the successful conclusion of our structural-change process requires a stable international financial system, the timely and effective financial support that the international financing institutions can extend to us, and the ability of those institutions to detect and prevent crises facing member countries in the external sector.

Let me now comment on the economic situation in my country. Mexico decided to face head-on the problems which led to the financial crisis head-on and to establish immediately, with the support of the international community, a strict economic programme entailing dynamic but necessary adjustment measures.

We have taken difficult decisions, with a clear purpose: to recognize the need for adjustment while mitigating its costs to the fullest possible extent and at the same time constructing a new platform for the sustained development of the economy.

As of now, inflation in Mexico is markedly declining, as are interest rates; productive activity in key sectors of the economy is beginning to regain its dynamism; and the Mexican economy is continuing its process of structural transformation with a view to maintaining and increasing our competitiveness. The balance of trade, which was in severe deficit, is now showing a surplus, and we are continuing to look for other markets in the world, be they developed or developing, in order to diversify our trade.

We fully recognize the social costs of the crisis, and steps are being taken to mitigate its effects. To assess the situation in its true light, however, it is not sufficient to consider only the cost of the present economic policy. The still greater cost that would have been incurred if decisive action had not been taken in this serious situation must also be taken into account.

Mexico will continue to insist not only on the application of existing treaties in force, the universally recognized principles of law and the decisions of international tribunals, but also on the major contribution made by some United Nations resolutions to the development of international law.

Therefore, we denounce in this forum, mankind's highest, any attempt to apply, on an extraterritorial basis the laws of a State to citizens of third countries, as the misnamed "Freedom and Democratic Solidarity with Cuba Act" would do. We appeal to the sense of justice, equity and international solidarity of the United States Congress to stop what would be, if passed, a clear violation of international law and an unacceptable political precedent for the rest of the world.

As a further clear demonstration of our commitment to the rule of law as a standard of conduct, and in response to the appeal made by the Secretary-General in his document entitled "An Agenda for Peace", Mexico would be prepared to withdraw the reservation made in its statement of acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice if other countries did the same.

Mexico supports the principle of shared responsibility among nations for the major issues of the new world agenda: the maintenance of a just peace in the world, the fight against poverty, moves to ensure international financial stability, free trade, the battle against drug trafficking, the regulation of migratory movements, with strict respect for the human rights of migrants, the strengthening of democracy, and the protection of human rights. Furthermore, on a selective basis, we think it is appropriate to formulate action programmes through world conferences, such as the International Conference on Population and Development, in Cairo, and the World Summit on Social Development, in Copenhagen; and the incorporation of women in our society on equal terms on the basis of the recent Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Drug consumption and trafficking have become one of the principal threats to the health and welfare of societies, endangering their economic, political and social structures. Drug trafficking and related illicit activities, such as the illegal traffic in arms, money laundering, terrorism, corruption and other criminal activities, constitute the most important challenge to the administration of justice in many countries.

It is essential for the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate the demand, production, supply, trafficking and illegal distribution of drugs. It is vital to forge new consensus around an international strategy against drug trafficking. For this reason, the President of Mexico, Mr. Ernesto Zedillo, has proposed the holding of an international conference to work out propose new solutions to this problem. The tenth anniversary of the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances seems a particularly appropriate time for such a gathering.

We trust that the General Assembly at this session will see merit in and find full justification for our proposal, which has already been endorsed by a significant number of countries, and we reaffirm, of course, our readiness to engage in broad dialogue on the scope and content of this initiative.

New forms of intolerance, racism and xenophobia threaten world peace. The United Nations must carry out an urgent analysis of the growing significance of international migratory flows in all geographical regions which are today affected by such destructive attitudes. We call on the international community to initiate a dialogue which will make it possible to find constructive solutions to this phenomenon, in a context of full respect for the human rights of migrants and their families, including workers' rights.

Starting with this general debate, the United Nations is entering upon a period as full as of uncertainty as of opportunity. The twenty-first century will differ from all the preceding centuries in that, for the first time, we shall have the opportunity of building a truly world-wide civilization, and, by the same token, a set of universal values to guide and modulate the activity of all States. The emergence of a collective awareness, the inexhaustible talent of human beings and the desire that negotiation and understanding should prevail over any idea of force or imposition are the cornerstones of a new world order in which there will be room for the richest and most noble contributions of all peoples.

In the phase the United Nations is now entering, Mexico will maintain its unswerving support for the greatest causes of mankind. As part of this commitment, we shall bring the moral qualities, the pacifist vocation and the spirit of solidarity of the Mexican people to bear on the building of an international system capable of improving the human condition and ensuring the dignity and survival of mankind and of the planet that we share with one another.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the His Excellency Mr. Alexander D. Chikvaidze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

Mr. Chikvaidze (Georgia): Allow me to begin by extending my warmest congratulations to the President on his assumption of his functions at this remarkable session of the United Nations General Assembly in its fiftieth year. It is without a doubt a fitting recognition of his rich personal experience and of his outstanding contribution to the world community.

I should like to address words of deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his dedicated efforts aimed at creating a more secure, peaceful and coherent world for future generations but, above all, for the close attention, constant concern and personal compassion that he has demonstrated with regard to the fate of my homeland.

On behalf of the Head of State, Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, and the people of the Republic of Georgia, I should like to express our gratitude to all Member

States for their support of Georgia in one of the most dramatic moments of its long history. I should like to assure the international community that despite a very difficult political landscape, which of late has included savage acts of political terrorism, the Georgian nation continues to strive towards its goal of democracy and stability.

I have been fortunate enough to have had the honour of addressing this unique gathering on previous occasions, and have always found that, although some of the problems facing our individual countries and our community as a whole persist from year to year, the unique nature of this world body provides an incentive to look at problems in a more optimistic light and to seek new and innovative solutions. This holds especially true in this anniversary year.

This Hall has witnessed different times and events, some of them full of tension and stress, when the world was teetering on the brink of catastrophe. One can say without exaggeration that the history of mankind has been written within these walls for the last 50 years.

Fortunately, the tense cold-war confrontation has subsided, clearing the way for the forming of mechanisms of cooperation and partnership. These mechanisms need time to mature and prove their vitality — but time is a luxury that few can afford in our day.

This fledgling process is also hampered by a variety of other factors. Foremost among these factors is the existence of a number of countries that are, at the same time, struggling to make ends meet and to reform their impoverished economies. This creates a very difficult economic and social situation, which, in turn, leads to political instability, ethnic or civil conflict and, in the final analysis, to additional threats to regional peace, making the problems of individual countries a matter of concern to the entire world. For Georgia, this most difficult factor is further complicated by the country's detachment from the global opportunities of commerce, technology, investment and information.

No developing country — and Georgia is undoubtedly among them — has the means to pull itself out of its current difficulties by its own bootstraps. And if left to their own devices, these countries will inevitably follow the same scenario and become additional "bleeding wounds" on the body of the world.

The international community is providing significant assistance to Georgia and to the other new independent States, for which we are very grateful. I should like to make special mention of the additional funds allocated recently for development and of the extensive activities of the United Nations Development Programme in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

This problem is of a greater magnitude, however, and its solution, we believe, lies in devising a comprehensive plan for the economic and social development of a number of fledgling States, involving vigorous actions on the part of the international community and a considerable expansion of the role of the United Nations in promoting development and in the allocation of additional possibilities to support the countries transiting to a market economy.

One specific option could be to elaborate general programmes of development for individual countries. These programmes would be targeted at the main spheres of the economy, based on a thorough assessment of individual needs, assets and possibilities. They would set the dates, define the sources of financing, and integrate international assistance and the efforts of national Governments. The programmes would include the activities of the United Nations and of national and international non-governmental organizations in each specific country. Such a general programme of a coordinating nature would enable us to clearly identify priorities, set goals and effectively harness the untapped reserves of each nation. It would also make much more effective use of international assistance and goodwill, which, we all understand, are not infinite.

The creation and implementation of such programmes would have a very important additional benefit: by helping to create the basis for a sound, growing economy, they would simultaneously be eliminating the breeding ground for internal wars and conflicts in a manner much more effective than any peace-keeping operation.

The cruel and merciless flame of war raging on the territory of the former Yugoslavia is a vivid example of the discrepancy between the realities of our world today and the means that international organizations have at their disposal. Death, unbearable suffering and misery for tens of thousands of people are the price of this discrepancy.

While the attention of the entire world is drawn to extinguishing the fire in the Balkans, the territory of the former Soviet Union has become the scene of events no less dramatic and equally threatening to international security. Many of them bear an uncanny resemblance to the Balkans in their train of events and in their destructive potential for regional and international stability.

A timely and just resolution of even one of these conflicts would provide a brilliant example and a strong motivation for settling the other ones.

In the past era — and I use this word on purpose, since we have witnessed a veritable change of eras — Georgia was often referred to as a laboratory of bold experiments. Though Georgia hardly has time for experimenting, this trend continues to this day with an unprecedented case. I am referring to the joint activities of United Nations military observers and the Commonwealth of Independent States peace-keeping forces in the Abkhazia region of Georgia. So far, this novel approach — or experiment, one could say — has yielded precious few results. Logically, this would prompt us to search for new forms and methods, but it should not at all exclude a more effective use of the existing and tested possibilities.

The interminable plight of Abkhazia and of the 300,000 displaced persons scattered throughout Georgia continues to weigh heavily on the entire country and constitutes another major factor in Georgia's inability to engage fully in the process of consolidating, rebuilding and moving the nation forward.

A fair settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia is made up of two equally important aspects: the unconditional return of the displaced persons to their homes and the definition of the political status of Abkhazia within a unified Georgia. This is not somebody's wish, it is not even solely a matter of principle; this is a fact of life, and one that will be implemented, sooner or later.

Despite the bitter experience of repeated treachery, the Georgian Government has never attempted, or threatened to resort to military force in order to solve this problem. We have always been committed to the peaceful and negotiated resolution of the conflict. It is extremely difficult, however, to carry on peaceful negotiations with a party that resorts to blatant "ethnic cleansing" and genocide as a means of consolidating its ill-gotten gains.

Moreover, the Abkhaz side has recently gone so far as to practically stall the negotiating process by demonstrating more than their usual intransigence. It is obvious that the separatist regime is determined to make no compromises, and prefers to maintain the status quo in the zone of conflict. Each round of negotiations has proved that the Abkhazian separatists seek to win time, while pretending that they are committed to a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

The separatist leadership is impatiently awaiting parliamentary and presidential elections in Russia. They attach great importance to the results, assuming that they will bring about a revision of policy priorities there towards a more pro-Abkhaz orientation.

Such is the nature of "aggressive separatism", which pursues its dark schemes with little regard for law, international public opinion, or elementary norms of human decency.

"Aggressive separatism" is a relatively new phenomenon which emerged on the ruins of the communist system and is being nurtured by various political forces. The peculiarity of "Abkhaz separatism" lies in its seeming usefulness for the larger political aims of these forces. This fact makes it possible for a minority of the population of an autonomous republic to drive out the majority indigenous population of the land by force.

This aspect of "aggressive separatism", making it a tool in larger political schemes, has international ramifications and represents a danger for world security as a whole.

The special role and possibilities of Russia in bringing about the resolution of the Abkhazian conflict are recognized by all, not least by relevant United Nations documents. Some recent developments encourage us to hope that Russia may finally decide to use this potential in order to bring about a comprehensive settlement of this problem.

The international community has applied much effort to promoting a peaceful, fair solution to the conflict in Abkhazia. In the past two years the Security Council alone has adopted 13 resolutions on Abkhazia. One hundred and thirty six United Nations military observers are situated in the conflict zone. The Secretary-General's Special Envoy has undertaken numerous trips to the area and has consulted repeatedly with all the parties.

In December 1994 the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OCSE) adopted a Declaration at

its Budapest summit in which the participating States expressed their deep concern over "ethnic cleansing", "massive deportation of the population" and "numerous deaths of innocent civilians", having included these specific terms in the declaration.

Add to this several declarations and statements adopted at CIS summits in Almaty and Minsk, which denounce any form of separatism. Member States of the CIS assumed the obligation not to support in any form or manner separatist movements and regimes on the territories of other countries, and not to establish political, economic and other relations with them. Neither would they provide their territory and communications facilities for use by separatists, nor render them economic, financial, military or any other kind of assistance.

At the CIS summit in Minsk the mandate of the peace-keeping forces in Georgia was expanded to include wider rights in order to facilitate the orderly return of displaced persons and protect vitally important structures.

The mere enumeration of all these measures and activities would seem to indicate that sufficient political and legal foundation has been created to finally resolve this festering crisis. However, the displaced persons are still waiting to return to their homes, there continue to be no guarantees of a secure life and normal living conditions, and the separatist leaders in Abkhazia persist in their aim of turning Abkhazia into a land uninhabited by Georgians.

Should we regard all the above-mentioned resolutions, decisions and statements as futile efforts that carry little beyond moral support? Or consider that the adoption of Security Council resolutions and their implementation are two separate and unconnected acts?

I recall an emotional intervention by the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic, Ambassador Kovanda, at one of the Security Council meetings, in which he suggested that the time had finally come to "call a spade a spade". As I have mentioned, this was done in the OSCE Declaration in Budapest last year, but this has yet to appear in any United Nations document on the situation in Georgia.

Also, the process of enforcing the implementation of the provisions of adopted documents is slack and, with very few exceptions, brings no results. I realize that I am touching on some sore points in United Nations activities, but the lack of movement on the Abkhazian conflict compels us to present the undisguised truth and begin the transformation from words to deeds.

In this regard, I should like to present some suggestions which, we believe, could contribute to the effectiveness of both the words and of the actions of the United Nations.

In our view, the resolutions emanating from the United Nations, as well as from other international organizations, must clearly assign personal responsibility to individual persons, organizations or regimes, guilty of disrupting the process of the peaceful resolution of conflicts. They should clearly state that these actions will inevitably entail adequate punitive measures.

First among them should be an introduction of severe economic and other sanctions according to Articles 41 and 42 of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. The specific form of sanctions intended for the territories under the control of criminals should also be defined clearly at the outset, as well as the fact that the population of these territories will be entitled to receive only humanitarian aid under strict international control. The case of Abkhazia is a relevant example. The Georgian Government has information indicating that weapons and heavy armaments are being stockpiled in some areas of the territory under the control of the United Nations Observer Mission and the CIS peace-keepers. The systematic commuting of ships between Abkhazian ports and regional States with the intention of supplying criminal gangs, the free movement of foreign nationals and the illegal operation of commercial entities cannot be tolerated either.

Secondly, during its history, the United Nations has not been energetic enough in taking compulsory measures against violators of international peace and stability. In a recent document devoted to the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Secretary-General describes such an approach as desirable in principle and enumerates the positive and negative aspects of entrusting this task to the Member States. Much room exists also with regard to the possibility of achieving the same objective by regional organizations, especially at a time when the coordination of action between international organizations has acquired more and more importance. Cooperation between the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia and the CIS peace-keeping force, as an example, could benefit from some additional elements.

With regard to this, I would like to point out that the establishment of a permanent representation of the CIS at United Nations Headquarters, headed by a dynamic and experienced diplomat, would be highly beneficial and desirable.

Thirdly, we consider the establishment and operation of the international criminal court a priority. The United Nations would be contributing greatly to promoting international law and justice and the court could quickly develop into a potent tool of preventive diplomacy, which in itself would be a major factor reinforcing international stability.

More often than not we are reduced to dealing with the effect, rather than the cause, of events. In other words, we put much less stock in United Nations preventive diplomacy than is prudent or practical. In the case of the Abkhazian conflict, this point, naturally, has no practical significance any longer, but conclusions can be drawn from it that would be relevant for the future. Preventive diplomacy must have real mechanisms and levers which would enable the international community to impose its will, rather than expose the futility of its initiatives.

In my intervention at the meeting of the Security Council on 12 May 1995, I requested an expansion of the functions of the United Nations observers in order to accelerate the repatriation of refugees. We felt that it was important to register and control the breaches of human rights. This would deter lawbreakers and keep the international community better informed about the situation in the region. Since military observers would be inappropriate for this type of specialized work, we suggested the establishment of a small team of competent professionals working alongside the observers to undertake this mission. The Government of the Republic of Georgia welcomed the decision to establish such a human rights monitoring mission in Abkhazia, Republic of Georgia, as well as its objectives, as presented in the Secretary-General's report of 7 August 1995.

I should like to take this opportunity also to convey our satisfaction with the decision of the Secretary-General to appoint a deputy to his Special Envoy, who would be resident in Georgia and would thus provide a continuous presence at a senior political level.

I have another suggestion of a more administrative nature. I know that I am expressing the opinion of a number of newly independent States in requesting that some mechanism be found to allow the hiring of representatives of these States by organizations and programmes of the United Nations system — primarily, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund, as well as others. The problem lies in the fact that most programmes and organizations have instituted a hiring freeze, which came into effect before the newly independent States became independent. So, in reality, this hiring freeze, as necessary and as useful as it may be from the point of view of internal administration, represents for our States a roadblock to the normal representation of its citizens. We would be very grateful if such a mechanism could be found.

Three years have passed since the Head of State of the Republic of Georgia, Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, laid out a set of very sensitive points at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. The creation of a global monitoring system for the early prevention of potential conflicts; the establishment of special units of Blue Helmets, after the example of Interpol teams, in order to control and combat the flow of conventional weapons; and the establishment of a rapid reaction force were among the proposals. The problems that prompted him to make these suggestions have, unfortunately, grown more acute today and need to be urgently addressed. We are aware of the many difficulties in implementing some of these measures, not least the financial difficulty, but the costs inevitably grow astronomically when problems are left to fester.

Recently a forum was held in Tbilisi under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, entitled "Solidarity Against Intolerance, For Dialogue Between Cultures". It was held in the framework of the Year for Tolerance declared by the United Nations. The main aim of the forum was to find ways out of the situation in which the countries infected by the virus of intolerance had found themselves. It is symbolic that Georgia, a country known historically for its tolerance, hosted the forum. I am sure that everyone shares the opinion expressed in Tbilisi, that

> "we cannot afford to overlook intolerance, since indifference and complacency equal complicity".

The contribution of the United Nations to the process of maintaining international peace and stability is enormous. And yet numerous open wounds remain in the world. Conventional wisdom would hold the United Nations solely responsible for not being able to close them. There are, however, deeper reasons for this.

At the root of the problem of the United Nations ineffectiveness, we see the current situation in the world. The system of coordinates into which the United Nations was born 50 years ago has been drastically and precipitously altered by the rapid disintegration of the bipolar world and the emergence of new interrelationships, new problems and new threats to world security, as well as to the security of individual Member States. In this situation it is all of us Member States, expressing the collective will of the United Nations, that need to determine what kind of United Nations we would like to see at the turn of the century and, indeed, in the next 50 years, and what means we would be prepared to provide to the United Nations in order for it to be effective in the new situation.

As the representative of one of the many nations caught up in the vortex of these changes, I am confident that I express the opinion of all Georgians when I say that my country looks upon the United Nations both with disappointment, for the failure to contribute meaningfully to resolving some of our most burning problems, but also with hope and optimism that the United Nations will finally bring itself into conformity with the changes in the world and find the resolve and the means to impose its will and international law.

This hope is based on the fact that the United Nations is at its half-century mark and regards this not only as a time for celebration and commemoration, but, more importantly, as a time for stock-taking and mapping out its future activities, in order to be able to rise to the challenges of the next 50 years and of the twenty-first century.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, His Excellency Mr. Dick Spring.

Mr. Spring (Ireland): I warmly congratulate the President on his election to preside over the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We take confidence from the fact that his experience and distinction will be available to guide us in our deliberations at this historic session. I am especially pleased to extend my congratulations to the representative of a country with which we have the closest and most friendly relations as a fellow member of the European Union.

I wish at the outset to congratulate the parties to the latest peace accord in the Middle East, which will be signed in Washington tomorrow. It has required great statesmanship, courage and perseverance on the part of Palestinian and Israeli leaders alike to reach this agreement. We in Ireland will continue to play our part in supporting the peace process, together with our partners in the European Union.

In the same spirit, we warmly welcome the agreement reached yesterday in New York, which we all hope will lay the foundation for a lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and throughout the region.

If I choose to highlight two issues at the very beginning of my remarks, Sir, you will understand, I am sure, that it is because these two issues have created such a resonance around the world. The first issue to which I refer is the Fourth World Conference on Women. Ireland stands committed to the principle that human rights are indivisible — the rights of one are the rights of all. No system based on a universal commitment to human rights can survive if the rights of women are not seen as an integral factor in the equation.

Women suffer disproportionately from the effects of war and armed conflict, whether it be as casualties from land-mines or as the victims of systematic rape. Women and children form the great majority of the more than 1 billion people living in poverty around the world today. Women in most societies are prevented from participating fully in the decision-making processes and have unequal access to power. Women continue to be prevented from fully exercising their sexual and reproductive rights, including the newly recognized right to have control over, and decide freely and responsibly on, matters related to their sexuality, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

The Fourth World Conference on Women, held earlier this month in Beijing, addressed these and other issues of relevance to women. The Declaration and the Platform adopted by the Conference pose a major challenge to Governments and the international community to overcome the obstacles which continue to face women around the world. They also represent a solemn commitment by Governments and the whole United Nations system to take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to remove all obstacles to gender equality and the advancement and empowerment of women. On behalf of the Irish Government I pledge here that we will do everything in our power to ensure that this commitment is honoured and implemented.

The second issue to which I must refer is the resumption of nuclear testing by the French and Chinese Governments. It would be wrong if I were to address this gathering and ignore decisions that have — almost literally — sent shock waves around the world.

We in Ireland, confronted as we are by the ever-present anxiety posed by ageing nuclear facilities on our neighbouring island, have had many occasions over the years to know the worry caused by the potential of nuclear power. The great majority of the Irish people, therefore, easily understand and share the deep concern of the peoples of the South Pacific. Nor can we fail to recognize the dismay and dejection caused by the resumption of nuclear testing in the immediate aftermath of the successful outcome of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference. The finalization of the comprehensive test-ban treaty early next year remains an absolute imperative.

The President of the General Assembly is taking office at an exceptional time in the history of the United Nations. Next month the Heads of State or Government will meet here in special session to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization. The General Assembly, inspired by this anniversary, should mark a decisive new phase for the United Nations.

The world faces a daunting array of new problems which require the United Nations to adapt and revitalize its resources. The representative of Spain, Foreign Minister Solana, speaking on behalf of the European Union, set out these challenges in his speech here yesterday to this Assembly. Ireland associates itself fully with these remarks.

The fiftieth anniversary coincides with a more critical attitude towards the United Nations in many countries. There is a growing readiness to highlight shortcomings and failures rather than the longer-term record of real and substantial success. We cannot ignore this criticism, particularly when it comes from many who are ordinarily the strongest advocates of the United Nations. The United Nations, like any other organization, can only benefit from rigorous examination and adaptation.

But no organization can of itself provide wholesale remedies for removing the hatred, the fear, the distrust and the divisions in the world. Many of the shortcomings for which the Organization is frequently criticized have more to do with a flagging of the collective will to demonstrate the determination, generosity, courage and tolerance to live up to the obligations of the Charter.

The Charter remains the bedrock for what lies ahead, as it has been for all that has been achieved over those 50 years. The United Nations has a remarkable record on which to build: it has enshrined the universal obligation of respect for law and good conduct between States as the centre-piece of international relations; it served in numerous ways during the long years of the cold war to dull the edge of great-Power rivalry and reduce the dangers of global confrontation; it provided an indispensable framework for the negotiation of crucial arms-control agreements which hold the promise of a world free of weapons of mass destruction; it facilitated the process of decolonization and helped bring about the dismantling of apartheid; it prevented numerous conflicts through its peace-keeping operations and restored stability to many parts of the world; it set the basic international standards for human rights and monitors their observance; it has sustained efforts to eliminate poverty, alleviate distress and deprivation, and improve the health and living standards of millions of the world's most vulnerable citizens.

We may ask, what of the recent past? The United Nations has seen great recent achievements — in Mozambique, in Cambodia, in Haiti, in El Salvador, to take some examples. The peoples of those countries can bear witness to new hopes for a better and more secure future.

In other local and regional conflicts, however, the United Nations experience, in the face of extraordinarily complex and painful circumstances, has seen serious setbacks. The human misery resulting from the wars in former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Somalia has shocked the world.

Almost 50 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration, human rights violations remain a major widespread problem. With a resurgence of regional conflict and ethnic tensions in many parts of the world, we have been confronted with virtually every imaginable human rights abuse. In contemporary warfare, more than 90 per cent of the casualties are non-combatants who are often directly targeted because of their ethnic or religious affiliations.

Children, like women, are especially vulnerable. During the last decade, nearly 2 million children have died in wars and more than 5 million have been forced

into refugee camps. More children die in wars than soldiers. At the present time throughout the world there are almost 30 million refugees and displaced persons in need of assistance. In the Great Lakes region of Africa, as the refugee nightmare deepens, we require urgent and concerted action to avert any danger of new tragedies.

The scale of all these problems has already stretched to the limits our ability to respond, and has heightened the problem of United Nations credibility. It is against this background that we the Member States must revitalize the United Nations in its mission and equip it with the means to react with vigour and determination to the new crises which constantly arise. This means improving the response to humanitarian emergencies. But it also means tackling more effectively their root causes, poverty and deprivation, preventing conflicts before they arise, and more quickly containing and resolving them when they do.

The Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace and Agenda for Development are landmark documents that set out clear priorities and a programme for action.

One of the many bitter lessons that we have to draw from recent experience in Rwanda and Bosnia is that the traditional deployment of peace-keeping units is no longer, on its own, a sufficient response to the type of crises which we face. In the past, peace-keeping operations were primarily concerned with policing cease-fires between Member States, pending diplomatic efforts to resolve the substantive political issues. That, unfortunately, is no longer the case: 11 of the 13 operations established since 1991 have involved internal conflicts. Peace-keeping contingents increasingly find themselves operating in situations where government and civil order have broken down. There are no longer clear points of reference for such operations which have become politically and logistically more complex, and financially more onerous.

There are a number of ways in which the management and conduct of peace-keeping operations must be improved. Perhaps most urgent is the need to improve the response capability of the United Nations in dealing with sudden or complex emergencies. Important initiatives have already been taken in this regard with the development of the United Nations stand-by arrangements system. Such arrangements might perhaps be extended to other areas to ensure that a full range of humanitarian, logistical and civil defence as well as military options is available to the United Nations in dealing with the many crises which it is called upon to address. In Ireland we are actively exploring the possibility of bringing together a humanitarian liaison group comprising experts from a wide range of fields which could be deployed at short notice when emergencies occur.

Command and control of United Nations operations also needs to be improved. Greater attention needs to be paid to ensuring that the distinction between peace-keeping and peace enforcement is not blurred in devising mandates for operations, if the confidence and willingness of troop-contributing countries to continue providing troops is to be maintained.

Regional organizations can also play a valuable role in support of United Nations peace-keeping activities. It is of course essential that such organizations in carrying out their role do so strictly in accordance with the mandate which the Security Council has laid down. The United Nations should benefit from the support of regional organizations, as the Charter envisages, but should not in doing so relinquish its overall control and responsibility.

My delegation shares the concerns which the Secretary-General has expressed about the safety of United Nations personnel in the field. We would like to see the United Nations Convention on the safety and security of United Nations personnel enter into force as soon as possible.

Our concern extends to all personnel who find themselves in dangerous situations, including humanitarian experts working with non-governmental organizations, who are frequently the first to arrive in the field in the early, and often most dangerous, stages of an emergency.

On the basis of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, we need to look again at how we can develop the United Nations capacity for preventive diplomacy, early warning and mediation, and for timely intervention in disputes before they escalate out of control.

Ireland continues to believe that the task of preventing conflict would also be facilitated by the creation of a mediation body which would work closely with the Secretary-General and the Security Council.

The dispatch of special teams of advisers and monitors to areas of crisis and tension should be placed on a more assured and regular basis than in the past. I

believe that a small investment here would be amply and quickly repaid.

There is a growing acceptance that violations of humanitarian law are a threat to international peace and security. The case for the establishment of a permanent international criminal court is therefore more obvious than ever before. It is only through such a body that the international community can effectively demonstrate that massive human rights violations will never go unpunished.

The international community is attempting to break the pattern of violence in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia by ensuring that those who are guilty of human rights abuses are punished and that minimum standards of accountability are set so as to deter future offenders. We have rightly responded by establishing teams of United Nations human rights monitors as well as ad hoc tribunals to try the perpetrators of war crimes. This is a good beginning. It is also necessary to devise measures which would extend vigilance and provide early warning of potential situations of human rights abuse. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, supported by human rights monitors, is already playing a key role in meeting this objective. He must be given our full cooperation and adequate financial support.

The promotion of the universality of human rights achieved a significant breakthrough with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. However, our concerns are that implementation will suffer unless there is a significant increase in the proportion of the regular budget devoted to human rights activity. As a demonstration of our own national commitment, the Irish Government has this year increased substantially its contribution to the various United Nations voluntary funds in the field of human rights.

It is now time for the United Nations to pay more attention to constructing the foundations for peace through development. As part of the process of renewal, we need to work in partnership to pursue a new approach to cooperation for development — a cooperation which redresses the imbalances and has as an objective the realization of sustainable human development for all.

Ireland has consistently supported the elaboration of "An Agenda for Development", and we look forward to a substantive and relevant outcome.

Most of the zones of insecurity in the world are to be found in developing countries, and the Charter clearly recognizes that lack of development is one of the root causes of conflict between States.

This year is the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Great Famine in Ireland, a catastrophe of enormous proportions, which has had a lasting and searing impact on Irish life. Its memory is still very much alive, and it has reinforced the Irish commitment to the prevention of similar catastrophes in other parts of the world.

While many areas of the world, including my own country, have seen great economic and social progress over the past 50 years, the developing world, especially in Africa, has not enjoyed the benefits of this progress. How can we explain the fact that, in a world of plenty, one fifth of the world's population still goes to bed hungry?

Earlier this year the World Summit for Social Development agreed on a consensus approach to the development of international norms in the economic, social and related spheres. We now need to act at both the international and the national levels to implement the commitments and consolidate the achievements.

In recent years new opportunities have opened up for disarmament; we should now move decisively to grasp them. Never has the continued presence of huge arsenals of mass destruction been so out of step with the hopes and aspirations of the international community. Never has the logic underpinning nuclear deterrence been so much in need of fundamental and critical reassessment.

There has been progress in some areas. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been made permanent and its Parties have been made more accountable. Renewed commitments to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament were accepted by all participants at the NPT review and extension Conference. My country looks to all nuclear-weapon States, and in particular the five permanent member States of the Security Council, to keep faith with the spirit and letter of these commitments.

We welcome the progress being made in the negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Their conclusion next year would be warmly greeted by public opinion in our countries and would facilitate new steps in the field of nuclear disarmament, in particular the

successful conclusion of a treaty which would ban the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes.

Ireland is deeply committed to stemming the excessive flow of conventional arms worldwide, and we support the objective of a ban on anti-personnel land-mines, which have caused civilian suffering on a huge scale. The elaboration of a United Nations code of conduct on conventional arms transfers, which I have proposed to the Assembly, remains a valuable practical priority in developing greater international controls over the flow of conventional weapons.

In conducting its mission and fulfilling its responsibilities under the Charter, the United Nations must also begin a process of institutional reform and renewal. This should begin with the Security Council. The Security Council needs to be enlarged in order to increase its effectiveness and its ability to act, both clearly and unambiguously, as the expression of the common will of Member States.

Enlargement should enhance the representative character of the Security Council, taking into account the emergence of new economic and political powers as well as the increase in United Nations membership. It should also enhance equitable geographic representation, and it should not diminish the possibility for smaller Member States to serve. Enlargement should take place in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. After two years of discussion we have now reached the point where we should begin to clarify the elements of a balanced solution.

The Secretary-General has made it very clear to us that the Organization is now facing an unprecedented financial crisis. How can we expect the United Nations to discharge the responsibilities given to it by Member States if the Member States themselves are unwilling to meet their basic obligations under the Charter to provide the necessary resources? Unless urgent steps are taken, what we say here will be no more than empty words.

My delegation fully understands the reason why the Secretary-General has found it necessary to take various measures to reduce costs. We support the thrust of his proposals. However, as the European Union has made clear, we view with considerable concern the decision of the Secretary-General, as part of these cost-saving measures, to suspend payment of all troop reimbursement costs. Even as a short-term measure, this imposes a heavy and unfair burden on troop-contributing countries, particularly those which, like Ireland, have fully discharged all their financial obligations to the Organization.

If all Member States were to declare here their intentions to pay assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions, both for peacekeeping and the regular budget, this single commitment would do more than any other to strengthen the United Nations capacity to act effectively.

When I spoke last year to the Assembly about the Northern Ireland situation, I stressed the importance of the announcement, a few weeks earlier, of the complete cessation of military operations by the IRA. This was followed, some weeks afterwards, by a similar announcement by representatives of the loyalist paramilitaries. Thankfully, the guns have now been silent in Northern Ireland for the past year. This has brought the gift of peace, and the gift of hope, to a situation where both had been sorely lacking.

The gift of peace has been profoundly welcome. The unremitting toll of death and destruction which disfigured Northern Ireland for the past generation has been halted. The economic opportunities offered by peace have rapidly begun to be exploited. Freed from the shadow of terrorism, human contacts have multiplied across the divide in Northern Ireland and between both parts of the island.

The paramilitary leaders, through the maintenance of their cease-fires, have made an important first contribution to the climate of hope. However, only the two Governments and the political leaders in Northern Ireland can consolidate the hope implicit in the cessation of violence by underpinning it with an agreed political settlement which can enjoy the consent and allegiance of all. That is now the paramount goal.

In the Joint Declaration of 15 December 1993, the British and Irish Governments acknowledged as their goal

> "to remove the causes of conflict, to overcome the legacy of history and to heal the divisions which have resulted".

This task can now be addressed free of the polarizing and distorting influences which terrorism, and the countermeasures it calls forth, exert on the political process. It is vital that this unprecedented opportunity should be grasped.

A settlement of the Northern Ireland conflict requires the engagement and cooperation of both Governments and of the political leaders of both communities in Northern Ireland. The close cooperation of the two Governments has been the enabling condition for the progress to date. The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 and the Joint Declaration of 1993 are landmark documents in that process. Last February we published the New Framework for Agreement, setting out the shared assessment of the two Governments on how a balanced and honourable accommodation could be envisaged across all the key relationships. While this is not a blueprint to be imposed on the parties, it reflects long and careful consideration between the two Governments on how the underlying realities should be addressed and is designed to give impetus and direction to the process of negotiations.

The role of the two Governments is crucial because the Northern Ireland conflict is primarily about the wider British or Irish allegiances resolutely cherished by the two communities there. For that reason, there can be no purely internal solution. Innovative thinking and potentially difficult decisions will be required on both sides of the Irish Sea if the two Governments are to create the context and conditions where the conflicting allegiances can at last be reconciled.

The success of these intergovernmental efforts will, however, be measured ultimately by attitudes of the two communities within Northern Ireland. The attitude of the nationalist tradition has been characterized by an ever growing acceptance of the principle that there would be no change in the status of Northern Ireland without the consent of a majority of the people there.

They look in turn to the unionist community for an acknowledgement that the principle of consent, as well as being a rightful protection for unionists against the imposition of a united Ireland against the wishes of a majority of the people in Northern Ireland, also implies the rights of nationalists in Northern Ireland to be governed by structures which are relevant and responsive in terms of their allegiance and aspirations. The denial of the principle of consent, and of mutual respect, has been costly in the past. The relative weights of the communities within Northern Ireland, as in Ireland as a whole, mean that coercion is quite simply impossible, even if anyone were foolish enough to attempt it. Cooperation and consent at all levels are not just the best policy, but the only possible policy.

Because of this reality, the politics of the peace process must be resolutely inclusive. Any viable settlement must deal with each community as it defines itself, not as others would find it convenient for it to be. For that reason, I welcome the fact that the new leader of Ulster unionism is among the most forceful and assertive representatives of his community's philosophy.

The test of statesmanship for any leader in Northern Ireland and the kind of solution we seek are not about abating the rights of either community. They are about finding ways to respect them which are compatible with equally important rights on the other side. We know that talks can succeed only if both communities in Northern Ireland are reliably and authentically represented at those talks. Nationalism should be represented in its integrity at those talks, and so also must unionism. Both have to spell out how they propose to accommodate satisfactorily a tradition and an identity which is not their own.

Both Governments have explicitly set inclusive and comprehensive negotiations as their goal, yet these have not yet begun. That failure is frustrating and threatens to dissipate the momentum towards a lasting peace. It would be ironic and dangerous if those who have been persuaded to abandon violence were now to be denied the chance to make their case politically. It is vital, therefore, that obstacles in the way of comprehensive negotiations should now be overcome.

One of the most difficult obstacles is that the continued existence of arsenals of guns and explosives is a source of fear, anxiety and mistrust. The Irish Government, for its part, is absolutely determined that all arms should be erased from the political equation as soon as possible. Any debate is about the best means of achieving this, not about whether it should be done.

It is because of the importance of this goal that we wish to situate it in the context where it is most likely to be achieved in practice. We seek to avoid, as far as possible, symbolic overtones of surrender or of a one-sided admission of guilt. In this context, no less than in other contexts in Northern Ireland, the concepts of victory and defeat will never offer a solution.

To make the decommissioning of weapons a precondition for entry into negotiations, as opposed to an important goal to be realized in that process, ignores the psychology and motivation of those on both sides in Ireland who have resorted to violence and the lessons of conflict resolution elsewhere. We should treat

negotiations, as far as possible, as a practical step. Rather than surrounding entry into negotiations with preconditions, we should instead seek to build golden bridges to enable and encourage all to take part.

We need all those who have been part of the problem to become, as far as possible, part of the solution. Given the depth and cost of the problem, participation in negotiations should be treated as a necessity and a duty, not a privilege to be jealously withheld or awarded. If we multiply preconditions, we are in danger of saying, in effect, that negotiations can take place only when the problems they are supposed to address have already been largely solved.

In saying this, I do not wish to be in any way dismissive of the genuine difficulty many people in Northern Ireland have in dealing on an equal footing with those who have in the past used or condoned violence and coercion. It is clear that there is ample room for further guarantees and assurances aimed at building trust and confidence in relation to this sensitive issue. If these guarantees and assurances can be authoritatively and credibly underscored by a respected and objective outside agency, so much the better. That is why the idea of an international dimension to this confidence-building process is so appealing. We continue to work on it, in the hope that it can provide a bridge for all sides to overcome the present difficulty.

The Secretary-General has eloquently expressed the essence of our task in this anniversary year by saying,

> "To support the United Nations is not, and never has been, to subsidize a separate, independent entity. Today, more than ever, to support the United Nations is to participate in the only world Organization composed of all humanity and in the service of all humanity.
>
> "Today, a half-century later, it is our duty and our privilege to take this project to its next stage — the achievement of an age of peace, development and security."

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, His Excellency Mr. Seyoum Mesfin, on whom I now call.

Mr. Mesfin (Ethiopia): I would like first of all to extend sincere congratulations to the President on his unanimous election at this historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly. While expressing my delegation's full confidence that he will steer our deliberations to a successful conclusion, I wish also to seize this opportunity to assure him of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the discharge of this heavy responsibility entrusted to him.

It gives me great pleasure to commend my colleague, your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, for the very able and outstanding manner in which he presided over the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

Let me also take this opportunity to pay tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for all the efforts he has been making to ensure that the United Nations is as effective and as efficient as possible.

As we enter the second half of the last decade of the twentieth century, there are two interrelated and vital issues which will continue to pose major challenges to the international community: peace and development. There can be no doubt that the degree to which the United Nations is effective in promoting peace and in ensuring development for all is the most appropriate yardstick for judging how effective and vital the United Nations has been and will be in fulfilling the purposes for which it came into being. We pay tribute to the Secretary-General for having accorded these two major concerns of the international community the importance they so rightly deserve in his Agenda for Peace and Agenda for Development.

The few years that have elapsed since the end of the cold war confrontation have made us all realize that peace and security can hardly be ensured through mere concord between and among the major Powers. The removal of the threat hanging over humanity that was the undesirable symbol of the cold war is, and will remain, a major achievement that can never be minimized. All those devoted to peace must and should, within the United Nations and other forums, continue to contribute their due share towards ensuring that humanity is absolutely secure from the potential dangers posed by nuclear weapons, a noble task towards the achievement of which a genuinely comprehensive test-ban treaty constitutes a major step forward and a top priority. It is the earnest hope of Ethiopia and of Africa that this goal would be attained as soon as possible.

However, as much as we derive satisfaction from the removal of threats to peace and security associated with the period of the cold war, what the past few years have made abundantly clear is that the challenges we face in ensuring peace and security are no less daunting, and no less of serious concern today, than they were in the cold war period.

The types of conflicts that have been manifesting themselves in recent years, not only in Africa, but also in other parts of the world, have been more of an intra-State than an inter-State nature. The Secretary-General of our Organization has justifiably argued in a convincing manner in his "Supplement to 'An Agenda for Peace'" (A/50/60) how difficult it has become for the United Nations, under these circumstances, to fulfil effectively its peace-keeping obligations. No doubt, no matter how difficult the task, the United Nations should and must continue to assume major responsibility for international peace and security in all parts of the world, including Africa.

We, member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), have, in the course of the past few years, been in the process of augmenting OAU's capacity to play a meaningful role in the area of the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts on our continent. This effort will continue. But it is vital that the international community lend its support to this African initiative as some have already done. Above all, it is imperative that a more effective cooperation be created between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in this area, and we are looking forward to the consultation at the highest level between the two, which is scheduled to take place soon. In this regard, on its part as the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, Ethiopia is fully committed to the promotion of full cooperation between the two organizations.

It is the view of my delegation, however, that no matter how effective the United Nations becomes in mobilizing resources for peace-keeping, no matter how refined the techniques utilized are, the achievement of peace would remain as remote as ever as long as the underlying causes of conflict, in Africa or elsewhere, are not removed or mitigated. The search for peace, it is said, is in our minds; but it also has to do with conditions under which people live.

In Africa, certainly, and this could be true in other parts of the world as well, the major sources of conflicts are in one way or another intertwined with economic hardship and social problems confronted by the majority of our peoples. It is impossible to assume that the difficulty we have had in freeing the African continent from the scourges of war is unrelated to the despair and the loss of confidence in the future on the part of the majority of our peoples - despair and lack of confidence in the future, the explanation for which lies in the ever-deteriorating economic situation faced by the overwhelming majority of our countries.

It was largely as a result of the precipitous decline of the economies of African States in the 1980s - rightly characterized as a lost decade for Africa - that the General Assembly adopted in December 1991 the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s as a framework of partnership between Africa and the international community. It is now obvious that the commitments made by Africa's development partners have so far remained unfulfilled. However, the majority of African countries have made substantial progress towards meeting their commitments in political areas and in carrying out the functioning of their economies more efficiently.

In an era when the interdependence of nations is all too apparent and at a time when we all acknowledge that peace and security have become indivisible, the lack of sufficient commitment to the removal of obstacles to the development of Africa and other areas experiencing a similar situation, should be seen as a source of serious concern, with its immense implications for regional and international peace and security. To the extent that, in areas of the world such as Africa, peace can never be made to be durable without development, the best approach to and the most effective method for the prevention of conflicts is one that focuses on preventive measures in economic and social fields.

As a minimum measure, developing countries, particularly African States, which dominate the list of least developed countries, need to be freed from the various impediments retarding and stunting their economic growth and development. One such very critical problem faced by African economies is the debt burden and the debt-servicing obligations, which continue to frustrate the ability of African countries to pull themselves out of the economic crisis that they have been facing for well over two decades. No part of the world has been as much affected by the debt burden as Africa. We do acknowledge some steps that have been taken, and the promises made with respect to bilateral debt, including at the Group of Seven Summit in Halifax. But the magnitude of the problem faced by African countries

is such that nothing less than the most determined effort, political will and commitment by creditor nations to assist Africa overcome this major constraint would suffice for Africa to relaunch and revitalize itself for economic growth and development.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, one-fifth of the world's population is struggling amidst abject poverty. All the circumstances indicate that unless the problem of massive poverty is solved, it will be difficult for people to actively participate in development in any meaningful way under conditions of freedom and democracy. Thus, it is absolutely necessary to assist poverty-eradication measures in African countries in an integral and multidimensional manner. In this regard we emphasize the urgency of implementing the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, which aims at the eradication of poverty. We also appreciate the concern voiced on the preponderance of poverty at the recent Group of Seven Summit in Halifax, Canada.

Mr. Naranjo Villalobos (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

It is also imperative that Africa's partners in economic cooperation take the necessary steps to ensure that full access to their markets is ensured to Africa's exports. We still have to contend with the paradox that while liberalization is promoted as a condition for partnership with Africa, the same nations that lay down such prescriptions are often seen to be failing to live up to those standards.

The newly created situation in world trade following the establishment of the World Trade Organization has made the difficulty faced by Africa and other developing countries in this area all the more complex and daunting, and if flexibility in the application of agreements is not introduced, in favour of African countries, the consequences could be very serious.

It is the conviction of the Ethiopian delegation that, in the final analysis, each of our countries, including those of Africa, should assume full responsibility for the economic and political future of its peoples. The call on the international community to do the maximum possible for Africa in the economic area is an appeal to help remove the obstacles hindering the development of the continent so that Africa can regenerate itself through the efforts of its own peoples.

This is most particularly true with respect to food security, without which Africa, including my own country, can never regain its self-respect and dignity and be taken seriously as an effective actor on the international scene. I wish, in this regard, to commend the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for its proposal to convene a world food summit in 1996, a move which has been fully endorsed by African Heads of State and Government.

It is true that we in Africa also need to put our own house in order. We cannot afford to look for external excuses for maladies that are sometimes of our own creation. In this respect, Africa's economic ills are not totally unrelated to the mismanagement of its economies by its own leaders. Nor can it be denied that some of the conflicts in our continent have been caused by ill-governance and by the denial of democratic rights to the peoples of the continent. The path that my own country, Ethiopia, has traversed during the past two decades is very instructive in this regard.

It was little more than four years ago that the Ethiopian peoples managed to get rid of a military dictatorship that had for 17 years brutalized the society, brought its social fabric to the breaking point, almost destroyed the country's economy through mismanagement and the imposition of stifling State control, and militarized the society. For our new Government, which was established soon after the overthrow of the military dictatorship, the responsibilities of restoring peace and security to the country, introducing democracy and respect for human rights, and rehabilitating and reforming the economy were daunting tasks that needed to be tackled simultaneously and immediately. But we feel that we have passed the test, and our success in putting in place in our country the first-ever democratically elected Government in the long history of Ethiopia is a source of great satisfaction to our peoples.

Our vision for Ethiopia is one in which all its peoples would be proud of belonging to it. This is an Ethiopia inspired by grass roots democracy and a genuine devolution of power within a federal system as stipulated in the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia - a country which would be one of the pillars of peace and cooperation in its own subregion and in the African continent as a whole. My country attaches great importance to full cooperation with countries of its subregion with a view to promoting peace and laying the foundation for joint efforts aimed at the economic revival of our area.

No part of our continent has suffered as much as the Horn of Africa in the past two decades, as a result of civil wars and instability. Some of the conflicts in our subregion still remain unresolved. There are many reasons why the countries and the peoples of our subregion should and must be preoccupied with the need to establish durable peace. But this is by no means an easy task, particularly when some find it difficult to live within the bounds of international legality, to respect the principles of international law governing inter-State relations and to observe the norms of civilized international behaviour. But no matter how challenging the task, Ethiopia will continue to be committed to promoting peace, stability and cooperation throughout Africa in general and in its subregion in particular.

This is a very historic session of the General Assembly. We are preparing to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of our Organization. As a founding Member of the United Nations, Ethiopia takes pride in its achievements. We also long for increased contributions to the promotion of the sacred principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, whose implementation is so vital for ensuring peace, security and development for all.

If the global community could not effectively respond to the call for poverty alleviation, economic and social development, the achievement of peace and stability, nothing less would be at stake than the survival of our Organization itself.

This unique opportunity should be seized to chart a new path for the Organization - a new beginning whose features should be a more democratic and a more representative United Nations. The various organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council, should conduct their business with absolute transparency and accountability. It is my delegation's earnest hope, therefore, that at this session important steps will be taken to make the United Nations more credible, more legitimate and more effective.

I wish to close my statement by reiterating and reaffirming my country's commitment to the United Nations and its devotion to efforts designed to protect and to revitalize the Organization.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, His Excellency Mr. Grdal Inönü.

Mr. Inönü (Turkey): It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to the high office of President of the General Assembly. Under his able and wise guidance, this historic session should become a milestone in the enhancement of the stature of this universal forum.

I should like also to thank his predecessor, His Excellency Amara Essy, for his valuable contribution to the work of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Half a century ago, the world was witnessing, as we are today, the end of one era and the beginning of a new one. In days fraught with foreboding but also filled with hope, another generation established this Organization. There was ambition in their design and an idealism about how a better world could be achieved. After a war that had brought untold sorrow to humankind, 51 nations joined together for the common purpose of promoting peace, development, equality, justice and human rights. Their aim was to create a collective security system that would save future generations from the scourge of war, but for more than four decades the notion of collective security remained frozen. It was only after the end of the cold war that new hopes emerged for its revival.

We live in extraordinary times, times full of stark contrasts. The end of bipolarity freed the international community from political and ideological constraints. Today, a sense of global responsibility is growing. It is being widely recognized that only democracy, the rule of law and a market economy can guide us towards a promising future. Awareness of an era of a global society is spreading — but so are xenophobic and ethnic nationalism, racism and intolerance. Wars of aggression have erupted in different parts of the globe. We have witnessed the cruellest of crimes committed against humanity since the end of the Second World War. Global problems such as environmental degradation, poverty, starvation, terrorism, organized crime, illicit drugs and trafficking in arms require the concerted action of all nations. Today, we are well aware that the international community must address a human community that is profoundly transnational. There is a pressing need for a stronger and more effective role for the United Nations.

At its fiftieth anniversary, the United Nations can be proud of its work in fighting underdevelopment, social scourges and illiteracy, illicit drugs and diseases; protecting the environment; eliminating all traces of colonialism and apartheid; combating racism; accelerating

the disarmament process; supplying emergency relief to countries and peoples struck by natural disasters and wars; and promoting democracy and universal respect for human rights.

Successful as these activities have been, the main responsibility of the United Nations is obviously the maintenance of international peace and security — and it is in this area that set-backs have been more harmful to the United Nations. Regrettably, ongoing conflicts and tragedies have overshadowed the United Nations success story and have damaged its image and credibility. We have to face this reality and take stock of what we have achieved and where we have failed.

This is the most opportune time to engage in a self-criticism, to revisit the Charter of the United Nations, to go back to its basic notions. This is also the most opportune time to look ahead with realism and vision, to adapt the United Nations to the new world environment and to make it the real centre of collective security and global solidarity.

The United Nations experience shows that we succeeded when we reached a global consensus and we failed when we pursued our narrow individual interests. History will judge us by what we do today. We, the peoples of the United Nations, must address the challenges of our times with the vision of the founders of the United Nations. We must seize this historic opportunity to forge workable and durable mechanisms for effectively responding to the problems that confront us. Together, we have to make our Organization more successful in order to make the world a better place for all humankind to live in, so that children may not regret having been born into this world.

When the problems we face transcend national boundaries, international cooperation is the only appropriate and effective response. Facilitating this cooperation is the *raison d'être* of this Organization.

Although not exactly embodied in the Charter, the creation of the concept of peace-keeping and the subsequent activities aimed at its application have added to the efforts towards peace. However, peacemaking and peace enforcement, the really essential tenets of the original vision, have yet to be fulfilled. Let us not forget that the founders of the United Nations intended an organization that would not hesitate to implement international law.

To prepare our Organization for the next century, priority attention should be focused on the Security Council, on the tools and mechanisms of collective security and on the concepts of human security and sustainable development. The ongoing efforts for the restructuring of the United Nations in general should be considered and negotiated within this framework and in a far-reaching manner.

The central issue before us is the enhancement of the representative character of the Security Council and the democratization of its methods of work. The wide-ranging demands to render the Council more representative, responsive, transparent and accountable should be met. We are strongly in favour of a genuine and comprehensive reform. After two years of deliberations by the Open-ended Working Group, many useful ideas and proposals are now before us that necessitate further reflection.

I should like to draw the attention of members to the revised version of our proposal for the enlargement of the Security Council. We believe that a Council with at least 25 members would be more representative and thus be more effective. We also hold the view that the Council should be enlarged by the addition of 10 non-permanent members. Thus the existing ratio of permanent and non-permanent members could be reorganized so that the permanent members were one fifth of the Council instead of one third. These additional seats should rotate among a predetermined list of about 30 to 40 countries. Those countries could be selected within the geographical groups, according to a set of objective criteria, which could change over time. Therefore, the list would be flexible and would be updated after a certain period of time, to adapt to changes. Consequently, a new concept of constituencies in the distribution of seats in the Council would be introduced.

In this respect, we believe that the extension of the concept of separate constituencies for the distribution of elective seats is also worth considering. Setting up new constituencies for election could be one of the most appropriate ways to rectify the shortcomings and injustices of the present election system. This idea of electoral reform would enable us to find ways and means within the geographical groups to ensure a fair, equitable and orderly working system of rotation for all the non-permanent seats. I hope that our proposal, along with others along similar lines, will receive careful consideration.

In its Chapter VII, the Charter provides the Security Council with important mechanisms for the maintenance of international peace and security. Cognizant of the two pertinent reports of the Secretary-General, namely, "An Agenda for Peace" and "The Supplement to the Agenda for Peace", I should like to express the views of my Government on these crucial issues.

First and foremost, we need to put the concept of preventive diplomacy on the top of our agenda. Indeed, the idea of preventive diplomacy is embodied in the letter and spirit of the Charter. It is the most cost-effective way of conflict prevention. We also believe that the application of certain measures of preventive diplomacy such as fact-finding missions, preventive deployment and early-warning capabilities should be more timely.

In recent years, United Nations peace-keeping activities have vastly expanded. As an active participant in these activities, Turkey stands ready to further its assistance to the United Nations. We have also decided to participate in the United Nations stand-by forces.

Another idea of the founders which is extremely relevant today is reflected in Chapter VIII of the Charter. The challenges we are facing today exceed the means and resources of the United Nations. In this respect, the regional organizations have much to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security. The need for a new collective security architecture of mutually reinforcing institutions has become more compelling. The cooperation between the United Nations and the regional organizations should be viewed as complementary in nature. On the other hand, given the unique characteristics of each situation and the varied mandates, as well as structures of the regional organizations, we believe that an attempt to establish a universal model for their relationship with the United Nations may be counter-productive.

United Nations-imposed sanctions constitute an effective measure for determined action against the violators of international law. Nevertheless, there are serious shortcomings which need to be addressed. In this context, we share the Secretary-General's views that

> "Sanctions are a measure taken collectively by the United Nations to maintain or restore international peace and security. The costs involved ... should be borne ... by all Member States and not exclusively by the few who have the misfortune to be neighbours or major economic partners of the target country" *(A/50/60, para. 73)*.

In addition to this observation, the lack of efficient consultation mechanisms, as well as secrecy in the decision-making process of the Security Council for the imposition and review of sanctions, are also causing concern to the general membership. We are convinced that transparency in the activities of the Council with respect to sanctions will ensure wider support for their implementation.

The aggression and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be a historical test-case for the credibility of the United Nations and for the role it could play in shaping the future of the international system. The prestige and moral authority of the United Nations are being challenged. For a long time, the open defiance of international law and the blatant violations of Security Council resolutions remained unchecked. We even witnessed, with deep indignation and sorrow, the fall of United Nations-designated safe areas last July. The aggressor intensified its attacks on other safe areas. The long-awaited appropriate response to the aggressor came only after another marketplace massacre in Sarajevo. The United Nations-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) joint operation, belated as it may be, has been a very important step in the right direction. The involvement of the rapid reaction force in the operation has also been totally in conformity with the mandate as set out in various Security Council resolutions.

Turkey, also a Balkan country, is strongly in favour of a negotiated settlement. However, peace should not have priority over justice. We must never forget that no peace, throughout history, has ever been a lasting one when it was based on rewarding injustice. With these thoughts in mind, and setting out from the Agreed Basic Principles of Geneva and New York, we should like to hope that a just and viable peace can be built on the basis of the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious character of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hence, we firmly believe that the Bosniac-Croat Federation should set a model for the future of the Union of two entities. We attach the utmost importance to the reference made in the agreed principles to the preservation of the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina within its existing international borders. It is in line with this reasoning that we welcome the steps taken on the road towards peace. We should not lose sight of the fact that determined action and diplomacy backed by force have increased the chances of a real peace process.

The conclusion of a negotiated settlement must be followed by the establishment of a peace implementation force. Turkey is ready to undertake responsibilities within this force. The reconstruction and rehabilitation of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be the key for the viability of the settlement. Turkey is also determined to take an active part in this process.

At this critical juncture, we firmly believe that the international community should remain vigilant until the final settlement is sealed.

Turkey has always held the view that the stability of Macedonia is an indispensable requisite for peace and stability in the Balkans. Moreover, we have consistently maintained that the economic sanctions imposed on that country, coupled with the policy intended to isolate it from the international community, were completely unjust and unwarranted.

Turkey therefore welcomes the interim accord concluded between Macedonia and Greece on 13 September 1995. We are encouraged by this development, which promises to hold the key to the normalization of relations between these two neighbouring countries.

It is not inconceivable that neighbouring countries may have bilateral problems. The same also holds true for Turkey and Greece. And we believe that it is only natural that these problems should be overcome through a meaningful, comprehensive and result-oriented dialogue and mutual goodwill. Such a dialogue will not only serve the best interests of both nations, but will also contribute to a climate of peace, stability and prosperity in our region. We remain ready to address the whole range of issues that stand between us in a constructive manner.

As in the Balkans, legality and legitimacy have yet to be restored throughout the Caucasus region. Despite existing differences and ongoing conflicts, we hope that the peoples of this region will display the courage to look ahead. The countries of the region should understand that a just and viable peace has much to offer. Only then will shared prosperity be within reach and only then will democracy and the rule of law take root. That is our vision for this region. But this vision can become a reality only when those who continue to violate international law heed the calls of the Security Council and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as contained in relevant resolutions and decisions. Injustice and aggression cannot and should not be rewarded.

Regrettably, the main obstacle to peace and stability in the region continues to be the occupation of one fifth of Azerbaijani territory by Armenian forces. As a result, more than 1 million Azeris have been displaced. We reiterate our call for the immediate, unconditional and complete withdrawal of the occupying forces. We are determined to contribute to the efforts within the OSCE Minsk Group for a peaceful settlement and for the reversal of the consequences of aggression. In this regard, we look forward to the creation of an OSCE multinational peace-keeping force based on the decisions of the Budapest Summit, a force to which we remain ready to contribute.

Turkey also continues to follow developments in Georgia very closely. We hope to see the establishment of peaceful conditions in this friendly and neighbourly country without further delay. We are committed to the peace process in that country. With this in mind, we are actively participating in the work of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG).

The dramatic situation in Afghanistan, a country with which we have strong historical bonds, deeply worries us. The ongoing fratricidal conflict has added to the sufferings of millions of innocent civilians. We are equally concerned with the ominous possibility that this conflict may acquire a regional dimension. We regret that the earlier efforts of Ambassador Mestiri have been rendered ineffective despite the commitments of all the warring parties. We hope that the recently renewed efforts of Ambassador Mestiri, along with those of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), will pave the way for a viable settlement based on the unity and territorial integrity of Afghanistan.

Turkey is located at the crossroads of continents and cultures. The post-cold-war geopolitics of Eurasia have given us a pivotal role in this region. Most of the newly independent States of the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia have historical, cultural, fraternal and linguistic ties with Turkey. With a keen sense of history and moral obligation, we have been striving to exert our share of the efforts needed for the harmonization of civilizations. To this end, as well as to contribute to efforts aimed at preventing the spread of ethnic conflicts and hegemonic tendencies, we have been active in endeavours to develop cooperative regional initiatives. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the enlargement of the Economic Cooperation Organization are cases in point. In addition, since the beginning of

1992 we have implemented an economic assistance package in over 50 countries on three continents.

As regards the Cyprus issue, we regret that despite the existence of sufficient material for a just and viable solution, as well as for the implementation of the package of confidence-building measures proposed by the United Nations, the negotiating process still appears to be blocked. President Denktas took initiatives to facilitate this process, reaffirmed his commitment to a bicommunal, bizonal federal solution and expressed his readiness to implement the package of confidence-building measures in the manner set out by the Secretary-General. He also proposed other good-will measures and invited the Greek Cypriot leader to the negotiating table. Regrettably, the Greek Cypriot side did not respond to this constructive approach.

The Greek Cypriot side continues to reject the implementation of the confidence-building measures and to set preconditions for the resumption of the talks. It is increasingly distancing itself from the negotiating process by shifting the focus to European Union membership with a view to altering the established parameters of a United Nations-sponsored overall settlement.

Despite these discouraging developments, we still believe that both sides in the island could find ways and means to reconcile their differences on the basis of the established parameters. To this end, we reiterate our support for the good offices mission of the Secretary-General and continue to encourage a freely negotiated settlement.

The momentum gained in the Middle East peace process makes us optimistic that confrontation can be replaced by cooperation. The Israeli-Palestinian and the ensuing Israeli-Jordanian agreements are historic turning points for the installation of a new way of thinking in the region. The road, however, is still full of stumbling blocks. As we all know, there have been violent attempts by extremists on all sides to undermine the peace process. Despite these attempts, it is vitally important that the parties keep to their commitments and continue on their journey of hope.

Tomorrow, another historic agreement between Israel and Palestine will be signed in Washington. I hope to attend the signing ceremony. I wish to commend the architects of this interim agreement for their great courage and determination. We fully support this remarkable achievement.

For over five years now, the international community has been expecting Iraq to comply fully with the requirements of all the relevant Security Council resolutions. Meanwhile, as reported by the Chairman of the United Nations Special Commission, the recent revelations of the Iraqi authorities on their operational capability to conduct biological warfare have created a credibility problem for Iraq within the Security Council. We hope that Iraq will take definite measures to restore international confidence in its future cooperation with the Commission within the framework of Security Council resolution 687 (1991). Furthermore, the implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995) would, in our view, be a source of relief, albeit limited, for the Iraqi people. Here, I would like to reiterate unreservedly the firm position which we have expressed from this rostrum on many occasions: We attach the utmost importance to the territorial integrity and unity of Iraq. This is vital for peace and stability in the Middle East.

I should also like to stress that, in no circumstances, will Turkey allow terrorist activities emanating from northern Iraq.

Terrorism poses one of the greatest threats to humanity in our age. It is also a threat to international peace and security. Terrorism violates fundamental human rights, particularly the right to life. It aims to destroy the foundations of civil society. We must join our forces to fight back vigorously. This requires effective international cooperation. Accordingly, the United Nations has a central role to play in our common struggle against terrorism. The General Assembly resolutions on human rights and terrorism — resolutions 48/122 and 49/185 — and on the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism — resolution 49/60 — are significant milestones which lay the groundwork for our cooperation. We must also introduce a plan of action for their successful implementation.

Similarly, the United Nations should continue to play its role in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction which pose another major threat to humanity. In this vein, preserving the integrity of, and full compliance with, existing arms-control and disarmament instruments at regional and global levels are of primary importance.

This year we are celebrating the United Nations Year for Tolerance. The promotion of a culture of tolerance is vital for consolidating democracy and for preventing ethnic conflicts. There is also a growing

awareness that development, peace and democracy are interlinked. People-centred development aimed at ensuring universal security based on equality and sustainability is the imperative of our times.

In this connection I wish to emphasize the emerging global consensus in support of a common plan of action towards a better world resulting from the major international conferences, which began in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, continued in Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen, New York and Beijing. We know that we still have a long road to travel in reconciling opinions and identifying common solutions. The implementation of the conclusions of these conferences is and should be our priority.

The last of these major United Nations conferences, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), will be held in June 1996 in Istanbul. The fact that more than one billion people are inadequately housed makes the subject of the Conference all the more significant. The City Summit in Istanbul will be a major stage in the assessment of the dimensions of this problem and in searching for viable solutions. Participation at the highest level would contribute greatly to the success of this important Conference.

In conclusion, let me repeat my opening call to the international community: we must build on our past to fashion a new vision, a new commitment, a new plan of action for a better world. Our plan of action should embody our best values, our noblest dreams, our most ambitious aspirations. To do less is to surrender to despair. The people of the world should know that genocide is not inevitable. Aggression is not inescapable. Poverty is not unavoidable. But the responsibility falls on all of us. We cannot escape the challenge. We must embrace it and not falter in creating a United Nations that is more responsive to our hopes and expectations, a United Nations that will remain true to the vision of its founders.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I now call on His Excellency, Mr. Teodor Viorel Melescanu, Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania.

Mr. Melescanu (Romania) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first, on behalf of the Romanian delegation, to congratulate Ambassador Freitas do Amaral of Portugal most sincerely, and all the members of the Bureau of the General Assembly, on their elections.

Romania is fully committed to the ideals and goals of the United Nations Charter and, as an active Member, deeply appreciates the activity of the United Nations at this time of an anniversary celebration when it is in the process of redefining itself in order to meet the present international requirements and to anticipate what will happen in the third millennium.

Allow me to convey to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, our deep appreciation for his sustained efforts to adapt the United Nations to the ever-increasing requirements of a totally changing world. I did that already in Bucharest when he visited us last autumn. At that time we had a very useful exchange of views on problems concerning cooperation between Romania and the United Nations and concerning the availability and openness of the Romanian Government to support, and actively participate in, the global efforts of the United Nations.

Romania is at present celebrating, not only the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, but also the fortieth anniversary of its admission to this world Organization. Despite its sacrifices and its important contribution to shortening the Second World War and the victory of the United Nations coalition, Romania was admitted to the United Nations 10 years after the Charter came into force. None the less, my country has proved its responsible commitment and its active role in the most important debate on international matters and in promoting the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

In the six years since December 1989 the legislative and institutional framework for a democratic society has been constantly under development in Romania. The broad consensus of all political forces in my country eloquently proves that we as a nation have opted to become a law-abiding State with respect for political pluralism, for a market economy and for fundamental rights and freedoms. The new institutions that have been established are now in operation and at the same time have been consolidated, thus contributing to the democratization of our society and the acceleration of the process of transformation, in keeping with the strategy for socio-economic reform which my Government has.

The complex reform programme has been unfolding successfully. In 1995 the reality in Romania differs from that at the end of 1992. The success of macroeconomic stabilization, and the improvement in the macroeconomy in general are an important argument for the integration

of Romania into the European Union as it is an argument for other countries of central Europe.

That does not mean that reform in Romania is going along smoothly and without obstacles. As is the case with other central European countries, its implementation involves large social costs which require permanent social security measures.

In this sense, I should like to emphasize the support and encouragement that the United Nations has given to Romania and to other countries in transition, which show the capacity of the world Organization to support the reform process.

In this context, my delegation wishes to welcome the Secretary-General's report entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". We feel that a substantial debate on this subject could define a new dimension for United Nations activity. Romania, which next year is to organize the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies has decided to make that meeting an important event for the promotion of democratic values throughout the world.

Romania's political objectives are determined not by circumstances but rather by its decisive commitment to democracy, market economy, respect for human rights and the need to ensure the country's peace and prosperity. We believe that Romania's integration into European and Euro-Atlantic economic, political and security structures — the principal goal of our foreign policy — will stimulate our own efforts at democratization and reform. At the same time, this demonstrates the Government's willingness to make a noteworthy contribution to the achievement of the goals of those institutions and to the creation of favourable conditions for stability and security in Europe as well as peace and security in the world.

By openly and unequivocally stating its basic interest in becoming part of the Euro-Atlantic economic, political and security structures, Romania is in no way neglecting its relations with its neighbours. Indeed, the furthering of relations with our neighbours, on a new footing, is a primary concern.

In this connection I would mention the recent initiative taken by our President, His Excellency Mr. Ion Iliescu, who invited Hungary to join in consecrating the historical reconciliation, on the Franco-German model — a remarkable example of success in the European spirit.

Romania has solemnly stated its willingness to undertake all diplomatic steps to move beyond the stage of purely political statements and to make the notion of reconciliation a *fait accompli*. The direct and unconditional invitation to Hungary to forge, with us, the future of our nations in a European spirit goes beyond a mere political-diplomatic step, envisaging as it does the establishment of a social and political framework based on greater confidence and more intensive cooperation.

To put it another way, for Romania reconciliation means a consciously assumed and systematically pursued process. At the same time, it should constitute for our two countries the surest way to achieve integration into the main institutions of the new Europe, thereby contributing to the consolidation of stability and security in the region and thus in the rest of the continent.

Romania's initiative in launching an appeal to Hungary to enter together into the historical reconciliation that is so greatly desired is the natural result of a policy of good-neighbourliness and understanding that Romania has been constantly pursuing with all its neighbours.

Dialogue and pragmatic cooperation in various areas of activity with States from all regions of the world is, moreover, another important direction of our foreign policy. The disappearance of the iron curtain gave birth to a vast and complex process of international détente by creating a genuine framework for dialogue and cooperation between States.

The renunciation of confrontational policies and the lessening of the nuclear threat created the conditions for the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We are convinced that that success will assist the negotiations aimed at the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction and lead to greater transparency, both in the area of armaments and in the area of security guarantees, as well as to a complete ban on all nuclear tests.

In recent years the United Nations has repeatedly put forward new concepts and mechanisms regarding international peace and security and economic and social development.

In that context, I am grateful for this opportunity to recall the constant support Romania has given the Middle East peace process by encouraging the continuation of dialogue and contacts among the parties concerned. In recognition of its contribution to the positive results of

that peace process Romania was invited to participate in the multilateral negotiations on the Middle East. It is prepared to participate in working groups on regional economic cooperation, water resources, the environment and refugees. Totally convinced that reason will prevail and that the irreversible Middle East peace process must be supported, in the future also Romania will encourage and support understanding and cooperation among all the peoples of the region. We sincerely hope that through the common efforts of all the parties involved, the United Nations and the international community, new progress will be achieved so that a comprehensive solution to the problems of that region can be found.

The Yugoslav crisis continues to create deep concern in Romania, given its close proximity to the conflict zone. Romania has appealed many times to the parties involved in the conflict to refrain from any action that might lead to the deterioration of the situation and to halt military actions and resume negotiations. Faithful to its position of principle, Romania hails yesterday's adoption, at the United States Mission to the United Nations here in New York, of a joint statement of supplementary principles for a constitutional settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Romania will actively support any proposal and any realistic action that will accelerate the pacification process in the territory of former Yugoslavia, including its peaceful reconstruction.

The political and military crisis in former Yugoslavia shows that attempts to achieve ethnic separatism and to gain territorial autonomy on the basis of ethnic criteria or to establish ethnic enclaves are not viable solutions. To the contrary, they may become sources of conflict and create enormous suffering for the population.

I should like to reaffirm from this rostrum the Romanian Government's decision to continue to strictly respect the sanctions imposed on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), despite the immense economic losses to our country. We do hope, nonetheless, that the competent international institutions will take a more careful look at the effects of the sanctions on third States and that they will rigorously and realistically assess the role sanctions can play in the peace process. We hope that States that are in a position to do so, international financial institutions, competent bodies and United Nations programmes and specialized agencies will all respond to the General Assembly's appeal in resolution 49/21 A concerning economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). At the same time, we would be interested in seeing the Security Council take decisions, in line with the progress achieved in the political settlement of the crisis, with a view to lifting the sanctions.

The situation in the eastern area of the Republic of Moldova is still a source of some tension. We are convinced that the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops, whatever their form or denomination, from the territory of that independent and sovereign State remains the key to the solution of the conflict in the eastern regions of the Republic of Moldova. Indeed, we note with satisfaction that the international community shares that view. We welcome the agreement reached between the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation on the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of the former country. We view this as a positive step that can contribute to increased stability in the area, and we express the hope that this agreement will become operational.

The United Nations has quite rightly been given a principal role in designing a new world order, one capable of responding to the hopes and aspirations of peoples. To achieve that goal, we believe, the United Nations must adapt its structures to the requirements of economic development and must pay increased attention to harmonizing commercial practices, technical cooperation and monetary policies of Member States and international financial institutions.

Recent United Nations activity has been marked by an important series of summit conferences which have dealt with topics of major interest to all mankind. These conferences have emphasized the urgency, the seriousness and the complexity of the topics they have dealt with and have expanded the sphere of action of international consensus regarding programmes throughout the world related to the environment, population, social development, human rights and the status of women. We feel that the United Nations and Member States must focus their efforts on the ways and means necessary to implement the decisions adopted by those conferences.

In this sense, I should like to mention the Plan of Action adopted by the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development. The usefulness of this document was reconfirmed at a regional seminar on its implementation in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which was organized recently in Romania in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). At the same time, I should like to express my

Government's readiness to organize a similar meeting in Bucharest next year to consider the progress achieved at the regional level in implementing the provisions of the Platform for Action adopted by the World Conference on Women, held in Beijing.

It is clear that the major global problems taken up by the United Nations cannot be resolved without adequate financial support. The unparalleled increase in the number of major problems brought to the attention of the United Nations has not been accompanied by an increase in necessary resources. The United Nations is today faced with a severe financial crisis. One possible approach to this crisis should be to consider the more effective use of available internal resources, the elimination of duplication in activities, more effective document control, productive use of human resources, strict financial monitoring and a permanent process of cost-benefit analysis.

With regard to the use of resources, peace-keeping operations deserve special mention. The unprecedented increase in these operations indicates, among other things, a more active involvement on the part of the United Nations in the management of crises and in preventive diplomacy. This new trend has necessitated an increase in resources. If we take into account that the great majority of present conflicts involving United Nations peace-keeping operations are internal, we have to admit that the international community has very limited means for exerting pressure. Continuing ineffective operations does not serve to achieve the goals of the United Nations satisfactorily, and consequently the Romanian delegation supports the trend towards a closer and more rigorous examination of all decisions related to launching new peace-keeping operations or continuing existing ones.

Romania has made known its interest in limiting and preventing conflicts in different areas of the globe, not only by promoting and encouraging the discovery of political solutions, but also by participating in United Nations peace-keeping operations in Iraq and Kuwait, in Somalia, in Rwanda and in Angola. Romania is determined to make a substantial contribution to such operations and initiatives. To this end, a special programme has been adopted to increase our capacity to react adequately to any request from the United Nations or other bodies while strictly respecting the principles governing the activities of the United Nations.

If we look back over the long road the United Nations has travelled during its half century existence and, in particular, if we look at the efforts it has made to adapt itself to the dynamics of international life in the last five years, we are convinced of the value and the historic destiny of the United Nations. I should like to assure the Assembly that Romania, with its dedication to peace, its desire to cooperate at all levels — bilateral, regional, multilateral — its firm commitment to protect international peace and security, its commitment to democratic values and respect for human rights, is determined to support the common heritage of values of the United Nations. Our presence among the Members of the United Nations for 40 years is based on the prestige and the moral authority which the United Nations enjoys in the eyes of the Romanian people.

For this reason, we shall, with all our energy and our available resources, remain committed to the noble duty of serving the ideas and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Dioncounda Traore, Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali, for Malians living abroad and African Integration.

Mr. Traore (Mali) *(interpretation from French)*: We are meeting on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in order to assess, as we do each year, the progress made by our Organization, an institution which was built to uphold peace and solidarity among men.

To judge by its agenda, this session very much resembles past sessions, but clearly this year's session has a much deeper meaning, because it marks the passing of 50 years for the Organization, 50 years during which the common destiny of diverse peoples has been consolidated and advanced, despite many challenges and perils.

It is significant on the eve of this fiftieth anniversary to see the representative of an ancient European nation presiding over the work of the fiftieth session. Indeed, the continent to which Portugal belongs, with its historic role, has always been a major actor in the mechanisms of international relations. The election of a President from Portugal testifies to unanimous recognition by the international community and is also a tribute to the President's talent and great diplomatic abilities.

I take this opportunity to address our warm congratulations to the President's predecessor, our brother and friend, Amara Essy, of Côte d'Ivoire, who

so ably and with great dedication guided the work of the forty-ninth session.

It is also significant that this symbolic session is taking place during the mandate of Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, elected some three years ago to head this Organization. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali is also known as one of the skilled negotiators who, through their foresight and diplomatic talent, have cleared the way for peace in the Middle East. Today, he is working tirelessly in the noble and challenging mission of having the United Nations live up to its noble ideals, its inviolable principles and its central purposes.

The Republic of Mali became a Member of the United Nations 35 years ago, on 28 September 1960, only six days after its accession to national and international sovereignty on 22 September 1960.

Mali, together with some 30 other African States, thus expanded the family of independent and free nations, bringing to the United Nations the vitality, humanism and generosity of the peoples of Africa.

The international personality of Mali — a personality that has been forged through the centuries — is based first of all on the ability of its people to live in harmony with their neighbours and on Mali's openness to the world, its sense of solidarity and its steadfast commitment to defending the values of mankind.

The Republic of Mali will continue to be dedicated to that vocation despite the set-backs and misunderstandings that are inherent in contacts between diverse cultures and traditions because we have the firm conviction that ethnic and cultural diversity constitute a source of mutual enrichment, and a powerful stimulant to economic, social and cultural progress.

Indeed, by its geographical position, Mali is at the crossroads between northern Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. It is a nation enriched by centuries of playing the role of a melting-pot of diverse cultures.

Today, fortunately, Mali lives in an atmosphere of good will, ethnic pluralism, religious pluralism, political pluralism, social and cultural pluralism.

The national problem in the northern part of our country has been making news because of partisan, unfounded allegations broadcast across the world by lobbies whose sole objective is to destabilize young States. The crisis that shook the northern part of Mali by its murderous and destructive character is one of the harshest tests that my country has experienced. With the restoration and consolidation of peace and the return of Malian refugees on a massive scale, the feelings of rejection of the State, noted with the blockages and ensuing violent reactions, have become an anachronism in a State that is founded on the rule of law, a State where neither the language of arms nor that of any other form of violence is admissible as a form of expression of the right to representation.

The successful meeting in Timbuktu between the Government and the development partners in northern Mali from 15 to 18 July 1995, is not only a symbol of exemplary international solidarity but provided an opportunity for international opinion to take note of the firm will of all sectors of Malian society to tackle, first and foremost, the tasks of development.

Born after a painful confinement on 26 March 1991, the date when a popular revolution triumphed, democracy has become a permanent and ever-present fact in the daily life of the people of Mali, who have had to pay a heavy price to achieve it.

The democratic revolution which took place four years ago in Mali is a part of a general movement throughout the world to knock down the fortresses of oppression and alienation of peoples. It gave rise to a young democratic State which, despite the shortcomings inherent in any human undertaking, does represent a successful example of the rapid construction of a State built on the rule of law.

Concerned with consolidating this democratic process, the Government of Mali initiated, and successfully carried out a year ago in the framework of a search for a general consensus on all of the problems of the nation, wide regional conferences followed by a national conference. This forum allowed all of the forces of the nation to debate in a transparent context all of the concerns of the people and enabled the governors and the governed to develop consensual solutions to face the challenges relating to the future of the nation and the development of the country.

May I emphasize that democratic Mali has made it a point of honour to respect human rights and the rights of peoples. Thus a distinguished panel met on 10 December 1994, the anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, bringing together noted

international jurists who, in a completely transparent context, held public hearings with the Government of Mali on its human rights management. This was a bold exercise which set a valuable example and enabled us to demonstrate that respect for human rights and the establishment of a State based on the rule of law have now become a reality in Mali.

In Mali, as in many countries, history accelerated at a dizzying pace towards the end of the 1980s.

The fall of the Berlin Wall was a symbol of the end of the division of the world into two rival ideological and military blocs. This foreshadowed fundamental and irreversible changes in international relations and led to a new thinking on relations of force between great and mid-sized Powers.

The end of this bipolar world was expected to make the risk of a world war disappear. Mankind hoped to see the realization of its legitimate aspirations to peace and security. That hope quickly waned when we realized that the period following the fall of the Berlin Wall became a period of heart-rending conflicts throughout the world.

We have been seeing a terrible cycle of violence and destruction shaking the very foundations of the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of many countries.

Africa, it is said, is a land of fire on the belly of the world. It remains a suffering continent. It carries within it deep divisions and we see unbearable images of endless lines of refugees fleeing from their own country. The problem of refugees remains a tragedy, one which the international community must rapidly face and resolve.

The inter-ethnic massacres in Burundi and Rwanda which led hundreds of thousands of victims to flee their homes are powerful challenges to human conscience and morality.

The situation in Rwanda calls for a constant effort on the part of the United Nations to restore peace and enable hundreds of thousands of refugees to return undisturbed to their homes.

The tragedy of Rwanda, which does dishonour to the human race, demands for that reason that the international community seek a way to implement solutions to ensure that that country shall achieve harmonious and definitive inter-ethnic coexistence. Hence, Mali, which has a military contingent in Rwanda, suggests that Rwanda should receive substantial assistance from the international community.

Among the armed conflicts that afflict our continent is that of Somalia. In that country, the situation remains chaotic as a result of the intransigence and ambition of the warlords. The States of that region have already made major efforts in the search for peace and we pay tribute to them. They should, with the assistance of the international community of course, redouble their efforts in order to achieve solutions acceptable to all the parties.

Should they succeed, the efforts under way in Liberia could set an example for the settlement of local conflicts through subregional initiatives. Since the 19 August signing of the Abuja agreement by the parties to the conflict, a transitional Government of National Union has been established in the capital, Monrovia, with a view to holding free and fair elections: a sure sign of the return of peace to Liberia.

With regard to crisis-settlement in Africa, Angola provides a source of great satisfaction with the signing of the Lusaka Protocol of 20 November 1994, and especially with the meetings at Lusaka and at Cape Town between President José Eduardo dos Santos and Mr. Jonas Savimbi. That impetus towards peace is being consolidated with the participation of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) in the exercise of power. I take this opportunity to offer warm congratulations to all the African Heads of State and to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative on their remarkable contributions to the restoration of peace in Angola.

Mali also follows with interest the question of Western Sahara; we sincerely hope that the organization and upcoming holding of a referendum on self-determination will lead to permanent peace in this north-western part of our continent.

As the President of the Republic of Mali, Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, has always stressed, Mali earnestly encourages the creation of an African-run central machinery to prevent, manage and settle conflicts in Africa. We invite the international community to support this initiative. The world must understand that the prevention of conflicts costs mankind less than dealing with their consequences. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations must grow increasingly involved in anticipating conflicts and less

dependent on seeking remedies after the illness has taken hold.

A major political development of the 1990s has certainly been the gradual return of peace to the Middle East with the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement in 1993. We earnestly hope that talks on the Golan between Israel and Syria and the new agreement on extending Palestinian autonomy to the West Bank will put the final seal on a comprehensive peace in the region. In the Middle East as elsewhere in the world, Mali continues to make its modest contribution to the quest for international peace and security.

Within the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the OAU and all other regional and subregional groups, my country quickly saw the need for a new, broader vision of international relations, the only credible alternative to the division of the world into two rival blocs, whose bitter competition could have led mankind into catastrophe. The end of the bipolar world confirms the correctness and relevance of that political perception. That is why, consistent with our convictions, we think that for developing countries the United Nations remains the most appropriate framework to plumb the true aspirations of mankind: the inevitable needs of development and the establishment of relations of greater solidarity between countries of the North and of the South. We must understand that growing poverty and destitution are at the root of violence and armed conflict.

Hence, development questions remain in the forefront of the concerns of all countries. Today, economic performance is a criterion for assessing the power of a State in the community of nations. Here, unfortunately, Africa remains on the sidelines. Indeed, despite the resumption early last year of world economic growth after several years of stagnation, the situation of Africa, resulting from its marginalization, continues to be of great concern.

The efforts of Africa's developing countries through economic reform, structural adjustment and encouragement of the private sector have been wiped out by fluctuations in commodity prices and by excessive costs of debt service. At the same time, direct foreign investment in the continent remains weak. Moreover, Africa's burdensome debt is constantly growing, now consuming 25 per cent of our export earnings. The tragedy of this situation lies in its concurrence with a resurgence of natural disasters and the persistence or exacerbation of illnesses such as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and, especially, malaria.

"An Agenda for Development" recognizes the right of developing countries — especially the least developed countries — to development; it must reorient the objectives and priorities of the United Nations system towards socio-economic programmes and activities aimed at eliminating poverty and developing human resources through education, training, social integration and the creation of productive jobs.

Unfortunately, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s remains no more than a devout wish. The only initiative under that programme — the establishment of a diversification fund for African commodities — has not succeeded owing to the clear reticence of some developed countries. This proves, if proof were needed, the scant interest in Africa's legitimate claims for reinvigorating the continent's growth and development.

International trade relations have been marked by the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of negotiations and the establishment of the World Trade Organization. Developing countries expect complete implementation of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round, especially with respect to compensatory mechanisms for the least developed countries, for net food importers and for those which will experience negative effects from the elimination of the generalized system of preferences.

According to concurring estimates by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the overall result of the eighth negotiating cycle will benefit the industrialized countries only. To take the example of Africa, OECD studies project losses exceeding $2 billion by the year 2002. In this connection, the World Trade Organization should offer bold decisions and recommendations in favour of Africa.

Environmental questions are of major concern, for the very survival of mankind depends on a balanced ecology. We fervently hope that the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will be quickly implemented in order to save our planet from dangerous, fatal deterioration. My country, which has experienced the effects of drought and desertification and which must still address their consequences, attaches great value to

the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, concluded at Paris on 17 June 1994.

Among the priority challenges facing the international community are social questions, including overpopulation, the production, trafficking and use of drugs, unemployment, violence, social disintegration and the role of women in economic and social development.

We are convinced that the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo, marked the beginning of a new process with respect to population and development strategy. Likewise, the recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development, held last March at Copenhagen, should help ease the fate of the most severely disadvantaged. The Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995, constituted a praiseworthy concrete initiative to take true account of the role of women in economic and social activities.

Like most other African States, Mali remains a poor country faced with major problems — structural and related to our circumstances — of economic development. The implementation of our programme of action for the 1990s is founded on strategies scrupulously based on agreements with the Bretton Woods institutions on economic and financial policies for the decade. Besides stemming from our national will, our country's basic guidelines are in perfect keeping with a strategy for sustainable development and with the United Nations Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s.

The Republic of Mali is working tirelessly to resume dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership. In Mali this has been reflected in round tables with our development partners in key sectors of the national economy.

On population policy, our country's activities include the establishment of a decentralized institutional coordinating machinery for the implementation of population policy throughout the country, and work in various areas of economic and social development. Moreover, the United Nations Population Fund programme with Mali has been adapted to the content and policies of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development.

We in Mali think that the implementation of these various United Nations programmes and activities, based first and foremost on an increasingly sustained national effort, requires more vigorous mobilization of both multilateral and bilateral assistance. Thus, it is increasingly urgent for rich and industrialized countries to provide the United Nations and its specialized agencies with the resources they need to properly implement the various plans and programmes of action adopted since the beginning of the 1990s. That is the only way in which the twenty-first century can see a widespread economic takeoff and shared prosperity for all.

The Republic of Mali is unreservedly committed to more open international cooperation based on solidarity. Stronger still is our readiness to work towards economic integration within Africa, most of whose States cannot achieve sustainable and balanced development on their own. Working through regional groupings, African countries must carry out an economic policy of complementarity with respect to their national production, and must limit all competition that is harmful and that gives rise to the serious problem of negative resource flows. These economic entities, established by interdependent States, must enjoy all necessary support from development partners.

The United Nations, born in the wake of the greatest trauma mankind has ever known, set as its goal the building of a new world through law. A powerful mechanism in the service of peace, solidarity and development had been created. Never before has the world produced such an impressive arsenal of texts, conventions, declarations and programmes of action, all aimed at defining the rules of international conduct, preventing war and conflict, guaranteeing peaceful coexistence and promoting development. With the United Nations, a new international ethic was born. The victorious Powers of the Second World War, which retain the formidable right of veto, had a moral duty to make that ethic a permanent one.

Having been conceived through relationships of force, the United Nations unfortunately grew fragile owing to bloc and Power rivalries. Hence, the Security Council, which is none the less the main body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, was often paralysed in carrying out its basic mandate. In the course of this half-century, several serious conflicts nearly led to a third world confrontation. While the world has seen a period of non-war at the

global level, people themselves have been afflicted by the balance of terror imposed by the nuclear Powers.

The new international political context that has prevailed since the end of the 1980s is increasingly fertile ground for an international consensus favouring a needed rehabilitation of the United Nations and a restoration of its authority in carrying out its basic mandates. There remains an urgent need to undertake the restructuring and revitalization of United Nations structures to make them more effective: to take more rapid, fairer decisions and to be better able to monitor, respond and sanction wherever and whenever necessary in the interests of the international community.

That, indeed, is the mission of the United Nations, which has established peace-keeping operations since 1948. It is the duty of all States to provide these peace-keeping operations with sufficient human and material resources, so that no one can doubt the Organization's credibility.

Wherever they are deployed, such operations must also face serious attacks on human rights and the rights of peoples. In that connection, the tragic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina merits the full attention of the General Assembly. In accordance with United Nations resolutions, the international community must restore the sovereignty of the Bosnian people and the territorial integrity of their Republic. The delegation of Mali, which also endorses the relevant resolutions of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, considers that the challenge to the international community in this former Yugoslav republic must be addressed with determination to stop it from becoming a dangerous precedent in international relations.

A world based on law must be supported by the ideal of a world of justice. The need to provide assistance, so often invoked by the United Nations and by regional organizations, has relativized the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a State when the international community finds in that State flagrant violations of human rights and the rights of peoples.

The United Nations has thus carried out an act of justice and law in reestablishing republican institutions in Haiti. It is also in the name of law and justice that Mali calls for the lifting of international sanctions against Libya and Iraq, whose peoples want nothing more than happiness, well-being and peace. Maintaining these sanctions, which affect only the Libyan and Iraqi peoples, runs frankly counter to morality and to our duty to assist and show solidarity with those peoples.

The twentieth century will have been a century of enormous progress in all spheres, in the course of which mankind will have demonstrated its impressive creative capacity. It is an important symbol that it was during this century, just a few months ago, that the international community reaffirmed its determination to ban forever the proliferation and use of nuclear weapons by the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The rejection of the nuclear weapon marks an irreversible choice by the world's peoples: in favour of peace and development.

It is surprising that nuclear-weapon States have not understood the extraordinary trust that the rest of the international community has shown in them by its overwhelming accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; that trust requires responsibility on the part of nuclear-weapon States. Those States must meet the challenge of peace by putting a complete and immediate end to real and simulated testing and by gradually destroying their nuclear arsenals.

As we come to the end of the second millennium, we see a world-wide movement for democracy and freedom. The Organization has everywhere encouraged the quest for justice and the free expression of peoples. To consolidate its gains and to become permanent, this vast movement must be accompanied by the democratization of international relations. But unfortunately, that democratization is late in coming. The President of the Republic of Mali has described the situation in this way:

> "Present inequalities among individuals, among communities and among States unmistakably raise the question of justice, linked at the national level with order and morality ... The world is composed of ongoing disparities, which give rise to conflict and violence. We must all understand the peril we incur by failing to reorder present structures that are unfavourable to the less well off and that benefit the more powerful. We need a world of greater solidarity; a less selfish and more humane world".

It is, indeed, sad to note that international relations continue to be governed from the standpoint of carving the world up into spheres of influence and spheres of interests, even though new political and economic changes in developing countries demand new behaviour by our development partners, specifically the industrialized countries. It is increasingly clear that on

the whole international cooperation is being fueled by economic criteria alone, to the detriment of the values of solidarity and justice. Yet the challenges facing mankind are common challenges. They include environmental degradation, pollution, toxic waste, sickness, hunger, poverty and malnutrition. The balance of the planet and the survival of mankind depend on the collective solutions we find to these serious problems.

It cannot be overstressed that only international relations based on solidarity, fairness and justice can enable us to face the challenge; and these are within our grasp. The maintenance of peace in the coming millennium will depend on the international community's ability to foster development for all. Hence, it is urgent to restore the values of solidarity, justice and democracy in international relations in order to save succeeding generations.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call next on the Minister for Foreign Relations of Guatemala, His Excellency Mr. Alejandro Maldonado Aguirre.

Mr. Maldonado Aguirre (Guatemala) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is a pleasant duty for my delegation to welcome the election of Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral to the presidency of the General Assembly at this especially solemn session. He will be presiding over a session which for the first time will hear statements by virtually all the world's leaders. We are convinced that his experience will guarantee the success of our work.

I wish also to convey our appreciation to Ambassador Amara Essy for the exceptional ability and efficiency with which he guided the work of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

Nor can I fail to convey to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, my Government's gratitude for his tenacious efforts for peace during a time when his outstanding diplomatic talents have been put to a hard test.

Any institution tends to shape its own life, which is not always consistent with previous models. Thus, however much those who carry out the provisions of a founding document may venerate that document, they cannot prevent an organization from transcending to some extent the founders' original wishes. Moreover, the older the founding document the greater the disparities between the original conception and the institution's functioning and practices. Obviously, the great changes that have taken place and the new hopes for the end of a century can only intensify this phenomenon.

For the United Nations to have escaped this trend would have been impossible, especially when it was dictated by circumstances. A half century has passed since the founding of the United Nations; none of the founders could have imagined the spectacular, dizzying changes that have come about since the San Francisco conference. We must remember that, as a legal constitutional instrument, the Charter needs a contemporary purpose-oriented interpretation in order to be properly understood.

With respect to the operational activities of the Organization in the economic and social spheres, few could have thought in 1945 that these would have acquired their present scope. Nor would anyone have thought that Article 2 (7) of the Charter would permit the Organization to become a legitimate champion of respect for human rights throughout the world.

We pay a well deserved tribute to the extraordinary skill of the representatives of Member States in devising negotiated formulas that have made it possible to snatch from what seemed to be imminent failure global agreements of great importance — and all the more sound for their having been achieved through a balanced consensus.

Mr. Peerthum (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Although we might have certain reservations about some specific elements of the functioning of the Organization, in general my Government hails the United Nations system's great ability to adapt to circumstances as it addresses problems calmly and with realism. While we pay tribute to these noteworthy virtues of adaptability, productive pragmatism and the ability to scale high political hurdles, our admiration should not blind us to the need for reform, a need we are already beginning to face up to. Such reform would enable us to remove the Organization's failings and shortcomings and thus make it more efficient and democratic so it can resist the unilateral practices that would supplant it.

Among the most striking features of today's world are nearly incredible disparities and paradoxes. Although speaking of these is a commonplace here, we cannot fail to note that the wealth of most inhabitants of a tiny minority of countries is in marked contrast to the great

difficulties and deprivation endured by three quarters of the inhabitants of the planet, who are prevented from competing on the international market, even with their commodities, by administrative restrictions, subsidies and discriminatory policies. There are places where the most sophisticated products of modern technology are the common tools of the worker; there are other places where you can travel great distances without seeing any technology more advanced than that used in biblical times. It is hardly necessary to note the contrast between the extreme poverty of so many human beings and the vast expenditures on weapons. As to democracy and human rights, we acknowledge the increasing world awareness of those ideals — although we share concerns about the relativism with which they are applied and about the way they are used to exert political pressure and even to trade in influence.

It will unquestionably be necessary to overcome those contradictions. We are sure that if that goal is achieved, even partially, the credit will belong largely to the United Nations, which by the terms of Article 1 of the Charter is

> "a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of ... common ends".

No Guatemalan can hear or utter the word that is at the very core of this Organization — "peace" — without immediately thinking of the most important problem besetting my country. Because of a fratricidal struggle promoted largely by a cold war that was alien to us, a struggle that for more than 30 years harmed thousands of families, endangered democracy and unleashed human rights violations by parties to the conflict, today the most fervent desire of the people of Guatemala can only be reconciliation and a firm and lasting peace. If this has not yet been achieved, it is not because of any lack of effort, patience and great tolerance by the democratic Government and, as is known, by the international community, which has acted principally through the Group of Friends and through the United Nations, specifically through the Secretary-General.

The Government of Guatemala thanks all who have contributed to the functioning of the machinery set up to help further our national goal of peace, reconciliation and development, especially the Secretary-General, the Guatemala Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Moderator and the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala. We are also grateful to the six Governments that form the Group of Friends of the peace process in Guatemala for their invaluable contribution to this arduous and painstaking work.

The Government of Guatemala has spared no effort to realize the aspiration of our entire nation to bring an end to internal armed conflict. In the sphere of human rights, the Government of President Ramiro de León Carpio is facing a situation deriving from the armed confrontation that has gripped our country for three decades, so the tasks before us are intimately linked with peace-building. This prompted President de León Carpio to sign the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights of 29 March 1994, by which he reaffirmed his commitment to principles and norms aimed at guaranteeing and protecting full observance of human rights by the parties, and his political will to ensure that those principles and norms are respected.

As a result of that Agreement, the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) was set up in our country. It has been accorded the fullest facilities and guarantees for its activities on our territory. The implementation of some of the recommendations of MINUGUA has met with difficulties owing to institutional limitations; we are endeavouring to resolve these, although it must be recognized that some provisions do not have the impetus that would secure compliance in the short term.

Also, a Counsel for Human Rights is now at work in my country; this is a post formerly filled by President de León Carpio. This office retains and is enhancing its prestige within the country and its international credibility. The Presidential Human Rights Committee (COPREDEH) is making ever greater efforts to ensure that the recommendations are duly complied with. Reflecting my Government's political will, there are also preventive mechanisms to avoid human rights violations.

I turn now to the process of Central American integration, which gave rise to the signing of the Tegucigalpa Protocol to the Charter of the Organization of American States. The Central American Integration System (SICA), founded as an intergovernmental organization, has been working successfully since the beginning of 1993 with the purpose of strengthening integration in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres.

Guatemala hopes that — bearing in mind the importance of the Central American Integration System, which encompasses virtually all activities of the Governments of its member States and which covers a contiguous area of some 425,000 square kilometres inhabited by nearly 30 million people — the General Assembly will accede to the request made by Guatemala along with the other members of the System and Panama to grant SICA observer status in the General Assembly.

The Central American region founded the Alliance for Sustainable Development to strengthen integration based on democracy, improvement of the quality of life, respect for and development of the vitality and diversity of the land, and the multicultural and multiethnic nature of our isthmus. We supported the establishment of the Association of Caribbean States, and we are participating in the World Trade Organization; these, we feel, are proper forums to foster values that enrich society and promote fair rules of trade. For similar reasons we shall attend the Ibero-American summit to take place at Bariloche, Argentina, and the summit of non-aligned countries to be held at Cartagena, Colombia. We will be at the upcoming Tuxtla II meeting and at talks between Central America and other countries and regional groupings.

Recently, we attended the Fourth World Conference on Women, where my delegation supported recommendations promoting the material and moral advancement of women in keeping with ethical concepts that respect women and grant them dignity and participation with the right to complete equality.

Our contribution to United Nations efforts towards the democratic rehabilitation of Haiti have taken the form of a contingent of army specialists in peaceful operations.

This is the moment to refer to Guatemala's contribution to two important General Assembly initiatives with respect to the development of legal principles set out in the Charter: the well known Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, which was adopted by the Assembly on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Charter, and which my country introduced on behalf of its 41 sponsors; and our second contribution aimed at promoting the use of conciliation as one of the means of peaceful settlement of disputes between States set out in Article 33 of the Charter. Guatemala submitted the first version of these proposed rules to the General Assembly in 1990. At its 1995 session, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Charter endorsed the final version of the proposed rules by consensus and recommended that the General Assembly bring them to the attention of States.

Consistent with our devotion to law and firmly convinced of the benefits of peace and the importance of mutual cooperation, Guatemala gives priority to the peaceful settlement of disputes. Hence, in connection with the territorial dispute with Belize, my country hopes that there will be a decisive solution through a more realistic, constructive and forward-looking dialogue, unconstrained by any limits other than the principles of good faith and the dignity of the parties.

Guatemala is vastly pleased at the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and at the fact that this was achieved through a truly historic decision, without a vote. Together with our satisfaction at the indefinite extension of the Treaty, we also feel pride, because Latin America is the least heavily armed region in the world and, thanks to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, is the only region that has become a nuclear-weapon-free zone forever. We regret the resumption of nuclear testing and therefore urge the adoption of new initiatives to forge a new world order that would eliminate nuclear weapons and in which security would be overseen by international institutions sustaining the force of law. That is why my delegation is among the sponsors of a draft resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly by States parties and signatories of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty of Rarotonga.

Guatemala has had the tragic and painful experience of the laying of mines by outlaw groups, and we vigorously condemn the use of mines and support all proposals intended to prohibit them.

We note with satisfaction that the Middle East peace process is moving forward. Guatemala hopes that wisdom will prevail, which after so many decades of struggle and violence will make it possible for peace to reign forever in a land of such deep significance to three great religions.

Guatemala is pleased that greater use is now being made of the International Court of Justice than ever before. We are pleased too at the wide geographical range of the cases before what can rightly be known as a World Court. Recalling the precedent-setting creation of a Central American international court, which is now being restored, my country will venture to propose the

candidature of an experienced Guatemalan jurist for a seat on the International Court of Justice; we are convinced that he could make a most important contribution to the work of the Court.

Following careful consideration of the items on the agenda of the World Summit for Social Development, Guatemala participated in that conference with the greatest interest and with high hopes; the Summit was addressed by President de León Carpio.

We are convinced that unless the fundamental principle of universality is fully observed, our Organization will be unable fully to attain its purposes. We therefore urge consideration of the situation of the Republic of China in Taiwan so that this country may have a forum in which to discuss its future peacefully with its historical brethren.

Fifty years after post-war statesmen conceived the plan for a world organization intended to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, poverty and ignorance, we must be optimistic in our assessment of the results, for they have saved the world from the irreparable harm of total conflagration. Although it is true that at times the cold war flared up in local armed conflicts encouraged by the rivalry between opposing super-Powers which at the time seemed irreconcilable, today we breathe a more tranquil atmosphere with respect to military security. But that atmosphere is less secure with respect to cooperation for development, because the rules of the economic order sometimes forget that economic weakness is not only an internal matter for States but is also a responsibility for those who have achieved a more than dignified standard of living and who have an obligation to transfer resources and technology for the sake of world-wide justice.

We close with the well known phrase of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, which we invite members to ponder: "The new name for peace is development".

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gomersall (United Kingdom): My delegation would like to respond briefly to the remarks made by the Foreign Minister of Argentina concerning the Falkland Islands.

My delegation welcomes the Foreign Minister's accent on the increasing cooperation between the United Kingdom and Argentina which characterizes our bilateral relationship.

On the question of the Falkland Islands, as our Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, stated in the Assembly last year, we have no doubt about Britain's sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and other British dependencies in the South Atlantic, sovereignty which rests upon the firm historical foundations and upon the inalienable right of the Falkland Islanders to self-determination, which they have exercised on repeated occasions in democratic elections.

We must heed the wishes of the people concerned. The elected representatives of the Islanders, who visited the United Nations for the debate in the Committee of 24 last July, clearly expressed their view that the Argentine claim to the Falklands was unjustified and should be dropped. The Minister refers to respect for the Islanders. We should respect their right to determine their own future.

Argentina and Britain are however succeeding in cooperating on the basis of the agreements which they reached in Madrid on 15 February 1990. Today we have signed an important agreement on cooperation over offshore activities in the South West Atlantic. This clearly states that it will not affect the positions of either side on the sovereignty issue.

My Government sincerely hopes that the progress which has been achieved will be built on and developed for the benefit of the South Atlantic region as a whole. This represents, in my Government's view, the most appropriate means of securing a bright and peaceful future for all the populations concerned.

Mr. Surie (India): An extraordinary statement was made against my country earlier today, couched in abusive language and consisting entirely of falsehoods. Normally we would not have considered it necessary to dignify it with a response. However, the statement was made by the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, and therefore it is necessary for us to set the record straight.

In his long tirade against India, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan inadvertently included one sentence that was absolutely true: it was indeed India that brought Kashmir to the Security Council. We asked the Council to take a stand against aggression on Indian territory. The Council's resolutions made it absolutely clear that before any further steps could be taken Pakistani forces had to withdraw from the territory they had forcibly occupied in Jammu and Kashmir. To this very day, that has not happened. The occupying forces in Jammu and Kashmir, in the terms of Security Council resolutions, are those of Pakistan.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the people exercised their right of self-determination in 1947 and, as in any democracy, they have chosen their own Governments in successive elections, together with the rest of the Indian electorate. As in any democracy, those who represent the people are the only ones who can negotiate on their behalf. Therefore, it is our view that the first step in Jammu and Kashmir is to hold fresh elections in which anyone who is eligible under the terms of the Indian Constitution can participate. Those elections will establish just who truly represents the Kashmiri people and their wishes. At the moment, those who claim to speak for the people of Jammu and Kashmir are self-appointed, and their authority flows not from the freely expressed wishes of all the people but from the barrels of guns supplied to them by the Government of Pakistan. Quite understandably, therefore, Pakistan is not prepared to have the bluff of its proteges called, and has therefore done everything possible to thwart the democratic processes in Jammu and Kashmir.

Instead, Pakistani-sponsored terrorism, which it unleashed in Jammu and Kashmir six years ago, has been taken to new extremes. The shrine at Charar-e-Sharif was burnt down by the mercenary Mast Gul, who claimed credit for this outrage, returned to Pakistan and was fêted in the Pakistan media and by Pakistani Government television for his crimes.

The Foreign Minister of Pakistan disingenuously claims today that the concentration of the forces at the border makes it impossible for the militants to slip in from Pakistan. Mast Gul's return to Pakistan, after burning the Charar-e-Sharif shrine, shows how easily Pakistan has managed to slip in arms and terrorists to continue the violence in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Government of Pakistan claims it only offers moral support to the Kashmiris. Pakistan's moral support has already killed 20,000 Kashmiris. The armaments our security forces have recovered from Jammu and Kashmir are only a small percentage of what has been sent by Pakistan, but could equip four infantry divisions. If this is moral support, we shudder to think what Pakistan's immoral support would have done.

Despite these provocations, India certainly does not have the slightest interest in hostilities with Pakistan. The Pakistan Foreign Minister talks of threats of war emanating from New Delhi. This is a figment of his imagination. The Government of India have repeatedly, at the highest level and in bilateral discussions, emphasized that India desires nothing but peaceful relations with Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan has refused to respond. Nevertheless, though we are disappointed that Pakistan does not wish to normalize relations or have bilateral talks, we have noted that their military leaders, who continue to be the most influential section of their leadership, have repeatedly said they anticipate no conflict.

There is no threat of war in our region, certainly not from India. Our troops are in peacetime locations. They are deployed in Jammu and Kashmir to defend the innocent civilian population of the State against the depredations of the terrorists.

The Pakistani Foreign Minister made an astonishing claim linking India to the Al-Faran group, which has taken several Western tourists hostage and brutally killed one of them. It is recognized by all Governments which have been drawn into this latest unsavoury episode that Al-Faran is a front for the Harkat-ul-Ansar, a terrorist organization based in Pakistan, financed by it and operating on its behalf. Al-Faran's direct link to Pakistan is established by the fact that they are asking for the release of three Pakistani terrorists in Indian custody.

Pakistan weeps about an arms race. This is ironic coming from a country that in the 1980s diverted arms given to the Afghan Mujahideen and in the 1990s, when that source ran dry, turned to the world for more arms. Through a recent amendment by the Congress of the United States, Pakistan will have several hundred million dollars' worth of weaponry added to its inventory. It acquired missiles several years ago, which it claims it has kept nailed down in their boxes — like its own people.

India's concentration is on the economic and social development of its people. We recognize that this must be our highest priority. We believe that if the Government of Pakistan also believes in this objective it should be possible for us to work jointly for peace in the

region. If we agree on these objectives, there is no need for any third party to persuade us to be good neighbours.

The Foreign Minister of Pakistan talks about Security Council resolutions on Kashmir as sacrosanct. In the same statement, speaking on Bosnia and Herzegovina, he describes the arms embargo on Bosnia, imposed in accordance with a resolution of the Security Council, as illegal. The Security Council cannot be deemed sacrosanct only when it suits Pakistan.

The difficulties we have had with Pakistan are not unique. The Government of Afghanistan formally complained to the Secretary- General in a letter dated 14 September 1995 about armed Pakistani interventions in their country, in collusion with mercenary groups, which Pakistan has organized, financed and trained, but which the Government of Pakistan, with its usual attachment to falsehood, claims to disown. Taliban in Afghanistan and Al-Faran in Jammu and Kashmir are both creatures of the Government of Pakistan.

Having perfected the art of State-sponsored terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, and in Afghanistan, Pakistan has now unleashed terror on its own people. Karachi is in flames because the Government of Pakistan is practising a brutality on its own people with which the victims of Pakistani terror in Kashmir are all too familiar. This, of course, is in a way a long-standing Pakistani tradition. In 1971, State terror unleashed by Pakistani forces in what was then part of their country led to 3 million deaths, a scale of extermination and genocide that compares easily with anything unleashed under fascism.

I want to make one point absolutely clear. Nothing Pakistan can say or do, no violence, no outrage, no falsehood repeated a thousand times over, will change the fact that Jammu and Kashmir is, and will continue to be, an inalienable part of India. The Government of India will do everything necessary to defend the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to live in the peace and security which other Indian citizens enjoy.

The Government of India hopes that the Government of Pakistan will demonstrate sincerity to find a peaceful solution by eschewing sponsorship of terrorism across the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir and returning to the negotiating table for a meaningful dialogue, as urged by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization.

As I began by saying, this statement in exercise of the right of reply has been forced upon us. It is a foregone conclusion that, Pakistan's flow of invective and falsehood being inexhaustible, a further outpouring will follow. We do not intend to waste the time of the Assembly by responding to any further provocations.

Mr. Ladsous (France) *(interpretation from French)*: Some delegations have again today mentioned the question of nuclear tests. Particularly critical terms were used by two of them, going so far as to condemn actions by France and China.

France protests the judgements thus made, judgements not in keeping with an objective assessment based on the facts. In this regard, I should like to repeat that the completion by France of the current programme should be considered for what it is, namely, the completion of a series of tests, limited to eight at most, that will be completed before the end of May 1996. Our goal remains to conclude as soon as next year a truly significant treaty that would ban any nuclear-weapon test or any other nuclear explosion.

I repeat, the completion of our test programme is not doing damage to the environment. It is in keeping with the law and with the commitments made by France. Extreme restraint does not in any way mean a ban. Finally, this programme will allow France to become an advocate of the most satisfactory, most stringent, version of the test-ban Treaty.

Mr. Basabe (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: In exercise of the right of reply, having heard the comments of the delegation of the United Kingdom the Argentine Republic wishes to confirm the views expressed by our Foreign Minister, Mr. Di Tella, in his statement this morning in the general debate.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): We have heard the statement of the representative of India and his utterly fallacious and baseless allegations against Pakistan. Let us examine the points he made, beginning with the reference to Kashmir as an integral part of India.

The incontrovertible fact is that Jammu and Kashmir is not a part of India. Kashmir is a disputed territory, and has been recognized as such by the United Nations for the last 47 years. This is substantiated in Security Council resolutions, United Nations maps and official documents of the United Nations all substantiate this. Security Council resolutions clearly determine that the

final disposition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir will be made in accordance with the will of the people expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations.

Kashmir remains on the agenda of the Security Council. The Secretary-General's annual report on the work of the Organization affirms that the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir has to be resolved. The oldest United Nations peace-keeping operation, the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), has been stationed along the Line of Control since 1949. Indian leadership itself is on record as accepting the disputed nature of Jammu and Kashmir. The first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, stated that India had left the question of the final solution to the people of Kashmir and that it was determined to abide by that decision.

The allegation that Pakistan was somehow responsible for the non-implementation of resolutions of the Security Council and of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) is false and unsubstantiated.

The question of demilitarization applied to the Jammu and Kashmir territory as a whole, and not to that of liberated Jammu and Kashmir alone. When the time came for the withdrawal of Indian troops, India wriggled out of its commitment by offering many excuses. Sir Owen Dixon, the United Nations mediator, was constrained to report that India was insisting on conditions which made the holding of a fair and free plebiscite impossible. India also frustrated the efforts of Dr. Graham, Sir Owen Dixon's successor. India was not interested in any plebiscite and was determined to hold on to Kashmir.

Then, towards the end of 1950, in contravention of Security Council resolutions, India took steps for the total integration of Kashmir by convening the so-called Constituent Assembly. Thus, right from the beginning, it was India which stalled the implementation of Security Council resolutions.

Then India blames Pakistan for territorial ambitions in Kashmir. Pakistan has no territorial ambitions in Kashmir. It is India that has demonstrated the worst example of territorial ambition in Kashmir by illegally occupying the territory and brutalizing its people for 47 years.

From time to time Indian leaders and generals have threatened to cross the Line of Control and occupy Azad, Kashmir. In August 1994, the Indian Prime Minister threatened to complete the unfinished task of regaining Azad, Kashmir. After burning down the Charar-e-Sharif shrine and mosque complex in Kashmir in May 1995, Indian Cabinet Ministers and leaders vowed to teach Pakistan a lesson. This is territorial ambition in its quintessential form not Pakistan's moral, political and diplomatic support for the oppressed people of Kashmir under Indian subjugation.

The Indian representative also tried to denigrate the freedom struggle of Kashmir as a terrorist movement. This is an age-old ploy of the colonial masters to justify their stranglehold over forcibly occupied territories. If we were to accept the perspective of the oppressor, then most freedom movements would fall into the category of terrorism. That is why the United Nations clearly differentiates between acts of terrorism and the legitimate struggle of people under alien domination and foreign occupation for their national liberation.

Indian allegations of Pakistan's abetment of terrorism from across the border are patently absurd. Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Since 1990 Pakistan has time and again proposed the stationing of impartial international observers along the Line of Control. Last year the Foreign Minister of Pakistan proposed to the President of the Security Council the expansion of UNMOGIP on both sides of the Line of Control. India rejected all these constructive proposals. This speaks eloquently of the propagandist nature of its allegations.

Unless India agrees to a stronger international mechanism for monitoring the Line of Control, all its claims about cross-border terrorism will need to be treated with the contempt that they deserve. In fact, India today is itself probably the largest terrorist State in the world. Over 600,000 Indian troops in Kashmir are involved in the most abhorrent manifestation of State-sponsored terrorism in the world. So much for the reference to peacetime locations of Indian troops! Its State machinery has been unleashed not only in Kashmir, but in all its neighbouring States. Pakistan, too, has been a favourite target of its intelligence agencies.

In the recent past, Indian terrorists have killed thousands of people in Pakistan. No city is safe from their terror. Fifty terrorist camps are operating on the Indian side of the border with the sole purpose of committing terrorism and sabotage in Pakistan.

It has also been implied that Jammu and Kashmir is somehow a bilateral dimension. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Simla Agreement of 1972 neither altered the status of Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory nor changed the international character of the issue. Nor does it prevent Pakistan from taking up the issue at international forums, particularly the United Nations.

India has always repulsed Pakistan's efforts to start serious negotiations on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with Security Council resolutions and even the Simla Agreement. India starts each round of bilateral negotiations with the condition that Pakistan should accept its illegal occupation in Jammu and Kashmir as a *fait accompli*.

The so-called elections touted by India are the most blatant subterfuge used to legitimize its illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. How can the people of Jammu and Kashmir express their will with Indian military and paramilitary forces brutalizing the people of Kashmir and the entire State machinery manipulating a stage-managed farce of elections?

India always starts talking about elections in Kashmir under international pressure. The entire Kashmiri leadership have rejected any elections. They have declared that such elections would not be a substitute for the plebiscite promised to them by the United Nations.

Reference has been made to events in Karachi. Pakistan is strongly committed to the promotion and protection of human rights. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohtarama Benazir Bhutto, has spearheaded the campaign for universal human rights as a basis for democratic institutions, national unity and socio-economic development.

Pakistan, however, has never emulated India's supercilious posture in claiming that the human rights situation in our country is perfect. Pakistan has never claimed to be a paragon of perfection. Human rights violations in Pakistan are committed by individuals and not by the State. In Kashmir, on the other hand, what we are witnessing is a pattern of massive, systematic and consistent violations of human rights committed in pursuance of a well-planned State policy. Tens of thousands of people have been killed by Indian security forces.

Finally, I come to the reference to unfortunate hostages in Kashmir. Pakistan condemns all acts of hostage-taking wherever they occur. Pakistan forthrightly condemns the inhumane kidnapping of Western tourists by an unknown group, the Al-Faran. All evidence clearly points to the fact that this barbaric act of hostage-taking is a crude and cynical ploy by Indian intelligence agencies to discredit the legitimate struggle of the people of Kashmir. The All Parties Hurriyet conference, an association of 34 Kashmiri political parties and groups, has condemned this act and demanded the immediate release of hostages. The kidnapping of the individuals and three successive actions from an area with an enormous Indian troop concentration, the hostage-takers' constant contact with the outside world and the Indian authorities through telephone and radio communications — all these facts raise strong suspicions about Indian complicity in masterminding this incident of hostage-taking. The international media have also reported intriguing evidence that Indian authorities are controlling the hostage-takers.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that no amount of obfuscation by India in Jammu and Kashmir, a territory recognized as disputed by this body, can bail it out of its present quagmire. India has reneged on Security Council resolutions on Kashmir to which it was a party. Over 600,000 Indian troops are now brutalizing the peaceful people of Jammu and Kashmir, but they cannot crush their resolve to win freedom from Indian subjugation.

The meeting rose at 8.45 p.m.